

IBN SĪNĀ AND MYSTICISM

Remarks and Admonitions:
Part Four

SHAMS INATI



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To my parents whose wisdom and vision lit my way, whose optimism
and love showed me the positive elements in the worst aspects of
life, and whose determination and inner strength helped me move on
with steadfastness and self-reliance. To them I owe whatever success I
have achieved in my life and in my work.

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Abbreviations

<i>Aḍḥawiyya</i>	<i>Risāla Aḍḥawiyya fī Amr al-Ma'ād</i> : when discussed it will be referred to simply as <i>Risāla</i>
<i>Aḥwāl</i>	<i>Aḥwāl an-Nafs</i>
<i>Hidāya</i>	<i>Kitāb al-Hidāya</i>
<i>Ilāhiyyāt</i>	<i>ash-Shifā', al-Ilāhiyyāt</i>
<i>Ishārāt</i>	<i>al-Ishārāt wat-Tanbīhāt</i>
<i>Ithbāt</i>	<i>Ithbāt an-Nubuwwāt</i>
<i>Livre</i>	<i>Livre des directives et remarques</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>al-Mabda' wal-Ma'ād</i>
<i>Al-Madīna al-Fāḍila</i>	<i>Ārā' Ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila</i>
<i>Madkhal</i>	<i>ash-Shifā', al-Mantiq, al-Madkhal</i>
<i>Majmū'</i>	<i>Majmū' Rasā'il ash-Shaykh ar-Ra'īs</i>
<i>An-Nafs</i>	<i>ash-Shifā', at-Tabṭiyyāt, an-Nafs</i>
<i>Rasā'il</i>	<i>Rasā'il ash-Shaykh ar-Ra'īs fī Asrār al-Hikma al-Mashriqiyya</i>
<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Remarks and Admonitions</i>
<i>RMNN</i>	<i>Risāla fī Ma'rīfat an-Nafs an-Nāṭiqā</i>
<i>RNBM</i>	<i>Risāla fī an-Nafs wa-Baqā'ihā wa-Ma'ādiḥā</i>
<i>Sa'āda</i>	<i>Risāla fī as-Sa'āda</i>

Introduction

The subject of the present study is the fourth and last part of Ibn Sīnā's late, comprehensive, and mature work, *al-Ishārāt wat-Tanbīhāt* (*Remarks and Admonitions*), sometimes referred to in this work simply as *al-Ishārāt*.¹ The translation of this text that appears as the last part of this work and to which references are made is based on *al-Ishārāt wat-Tanbīhāt, Part Four (Sufism)*, edited by Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1958). However, this edition was compared at every point with that of Jack Forget (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1892). My analysis and translation of *Part One (Logic)*, has already been published by the Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, 1984. A final version of an annotated translation and analysis of *Part Two (Physics)* and *Part Three (Metaphysics)* is being prepared for publication.

The title of the four parts, *al-Ishārāt wat-Tanbīhāt*, is drawn from the titles of the majority of chapters in the whole work. The word *ishārāt* means, among other things, signs, remarks, indications, allusions, symbolic expressions, and hints. Some of the meanings of *tanbīhāt* are the following: warnings, admonitions, and cautionary advice. The chapters entitled *ishārāt* represent Ibn Sīnā's points of view; those entitled *tanbīhāt* represent his alerting the reader to the errors of others. Occasionally, the former are called A Follow-up, A Piece of Advice, or A Closing Comment and a Wish; and the latter Delusion or Delusion and Admonition. The outcome is a collection of hints at the truth clothed in symbolic expressions plus constant brief reminders of where others went wrong.

The symbolic nature of Ibn Sīnā's statements coupled with the brevity and frequent ambiguity of his expressions render the text difficult to decipher at many points. A number of comments in the text indicate that the author is fully aware that the work involves difficulties and seems to have intended these difficulties to make the work inaccessible

1. Ibn Sīnā, known to the West as Avicenna and to the East as ash-Shaykh ar-Ra'īs (The Head and Master) lived from 980 to 1037 AD. For an English translation of his autobiography/biography, see W. Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975). For a list of his works, see G. C. Qanawātī, *Mu'allafāt Ibn Sīnā* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1935) and Y. Mehdevi, *Fihrist-i Muṣannafāt-i Ibn Sīnā* (Teheran: University of Teheran Press, 1954).

to nonphilosophers or those who are not endowed with 'sharp mindedness' or 'intelligence.' The first part, for example, opens with the following comment: 'For you, who are anxious to determine the truth, I prepared in these *Remarks and Admonitions* principles and generalities of wisdom. If you are directed by intelligence, it would be easy for you to subdivide them and work out the specific details.'² The comment with which Ibn Sīnā opens the *Physics* and that with which he closes the whole work and which has become a symbol of *al-Ishārāt* again reveals that he intended to keep the ideas of the work only within the circle of philosophers. Thus, he tried to protect the work from nonphilosophers by a veil of ambiguities and vagueness. Here is what he says in the Prologue to the *Physics*:

These are remarks concerning principles, and admonitions concerning fundamentals. He whose way is made easy will be enlightened by them, but he whose way is made difficult will not benefit even from what is clearer than them. Now we rely on His guidance. Once again, I state my wish and repeat my request for high frugality in giving away the contents of these parts to him who does not meet the conditions that I posited at the end of the *Remarks*.³

The conditions he refers to are posited in the following passage:

O brother! In these remarks, I have brought forth to you the cream of the truth and, bit by bit, I have fed you in sensitive words the best pieces of wisdom. Therefore, protect this truth from the ignorant, the vulgar, those who are not endowed with sharpness of mind, with skill and experience, those who lend an ear to the crowds, and who have gone astray from philosophy and have fallen behind. Thus, if you find a person whose purity of heart and goodness of conduct you can trust, as well as his suspending judgment on that to which doubt hastens and his viewing the truth with the eye of satisfaction and honesty, then gradually, and in bits and pieces, give him the truth he requests, carefully observing what you get from what you have already given. Ask him to heed God and the inescapable faith, following your manner in what you give him and taking you as an example. If you divulge or lose this knowledge, God will be the arbitrator between you and me. God is sufficient as a trustee.⁴

A number of commentators, the best known of whom are Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī and Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī, wrote long commentaries on *al-Ishārāt*. The former's commentary is a critical interpretation of *al-Ishārāt*; the latter's is a sympathetic study of it that also reveals its author's wide knowledge of Ibn Sīnā's other writings. These commentaries, which have already clarified some of the meanings of the text of

al-Ishārāt plus the difference between the eleventh and twentieth centuries, render irrelevant any concern about not respecting Ibn Sīnā's wish by elaborating and clarifying to some extent the ideas of this work at the present time, as long as a sense of its true nature is maintained.

The lengthy commentaries on this text, however, have not made its enigmatic nature accessible enough even to the philosopher. Some further clarification and elaboration of it is still needed, not to change its enigmatic nature altogether, but to make it better understood by the philosopher and to give a sense of it to others. The present study has a double purpose: to clarify the language and ideas of this text just enough to achieve the above two objectives and to introduce this text for the first time into the English language. This is done through detailed analysis and careful annotated translation, which remove certain ambiguities of the text, elaborate its brief expressions, and point out where possible the source of its ideas.⁵

I would like to stress that I do not claim to have presented the work with full clarity, nor do I wish to present it in this manner, considering that a certain degree of ambiguity and vagueness is intrinsic to its nature and part of its author's intent. *Al-Ishārāt waṭ-Tanbīhāt* is not a popular or an ordinary sufi (ṣūfiy) document; it is a symbolic philosophical work and must be treated as such. I believe that one may give a sense of it to the nonphilosophers by polishing it just enough to make it readable to them. One cannot, however, put it in the most lucid ordinary language without destroying its essential character. In translating *al-Ishārāt*, I have tried to remain as faithful to the original text as possible. This required me to maintain some of its hidden character, which was intended by the author. To translate it differently is to strip it of its nature and the spirit in which it was written.

The fourth part of *al-Ishārāt waṭ-Tanbīhāt*, which is the concern of the present study, is divided into three main sections, or as Ibn Sīnā calls them, classes, that is, groups of ideas. The first section, 'On Joy and Happiness,' is the Eighth Class of the last three parts of *al-Ishārāt*;⁶ the second, 'On the Stations of the Knowers,' is the Ninth Class; and the third, 'On the Secrets of Signs,' is the Tenth Class. While the material in the eighth and tenth classes is to a large extent found elsewhere in Ibn Sīnā's other writings, such as in the last section of *ash-Shifā*, *al-Ilāhiyyāt*, II, the content of the Ninth Class is on the whole original.

2. *Remarks, Part One*, p. 46; see also the closing comment of the same part, p. 146.

3. *Ishārāt, Part Two* (published with *Part Three* in Dunyā's edition 1950), p. 147.

4. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, pp. 903-6.

5. The reasons for translating, annotating, and analyzing the work, as well as the difficulties encountered in doing so, have been discussed in more detail in the introduction to the translation of *Part One* (see *Remarks, Part One*, pp. 1-5).

6. The first seven classes are devoted to the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. The sections in *Logic* are entitled 'methods' instead of 'classes'.

Based on the originality and nature of the Ninth Class, which focuses on the experience of the sufi, the fourth part of *al-Ishārāt* came to be known as a work on sufism, hence its traditional title *at-Taṣawwuf* (Sufism). The term 'sufi' is difficult to define, as it has been used in a number of ways. In the strict sense, it refers to the Muslim mystic, one who strips oneself from the world of nature and associates directly with the realm of realities and truths, one who perishes in oneself as an individual and continues in God.⁷ It must be mentioned that in the Ninth Class Ibn Sīnā describes the journey of the sufi without referring to its traveler by the name 'sufi', but only by the name 'ʿarif', which refers to one who knows by direct experience,⁸ as opposed to 'ʿālim', one who knows by reason or natural means. Regardless of names, however, the traveler is said in the Ninth Class to have the same kind of experience commonly attributed to the sufi. That is why as early as the Middle Ages commentators on the fourth part of *al-Ishārāt* recognized, and correctly so, that this text is a work on sufism.⁹ Later, the kind of sufism discussed by Ibn Sīnā, especially in *al-Ishārāt*, will be distinguished from other types of sufism.

To avoid misinterpretation of the title of the present study, I should point out that this title refers, not to Ibn Sīnā's personal sufi experience or mysticism, but to his *thought* on sufi experience as expressed in the fourth part of *al-Ishārāt*. Whether Ibn Sīnā was a sufi is not essential to the present study; nevertheless something will be said about it at the end of the analysis.

It should be mentioned that keeping in mind Ibn Sīnā's other writings was quite helpful in resolving some of the difficulties of the part under consideration. The works that were found most useful in this regard are the following:

*Ash-Shifāʾ, al-Ilāhiyyāt, II (Healing, Metaphysics, II).*¹⁰

*Ash-Shifāʾ, at-Ṭabīʿiyyāt, an-Nafs (Healing, Physics, Psychology).*¹¹

*Aḥwāl an-Nafs (The States of the Soul).*¹²

*Ithbāt an-Nubuwwāt (Proof of Prophecy).*¹³

7. For the various meanings of 'sufi,' see 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Ḥafānī, *Muʿjam al-Muṣṭalahāt as-Ṣafīyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Madbulī, 1980), p. 157.

8. In sufi terminology, 'arif' is one who witnesses God and the realities of things. For further elaboration of the meanings of the term 'arif' in sufi literature, see *Muʿjam al-Muṣṭalahāt as-Ṣafīyya*, pp. 179–80.

9. See Michael Marmura, 'Plotting the Course of Ibn Sīnā's Thought,' in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1991), pp. 341–2.

10. *Ilāhiyyāt, II*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā, Sulaymān Dunyā, and Saʿīd Zāyid (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-ʿamma li-Shuʾn al-Maṭābīʿ al-ʿAmriyya, 1960).

11. *an-Nafs*, ed. Fazlur Rahman (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

12. *Aḥwāl*, ed. Ahmad Fuʾād al-Ahwānī (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1952).

13. *Ithbāt*, ed. Michael Marmura (Beirut: Dār an-Nahār li-Nashr, 1968).

*Kitāb al-Hidāya (The Book of Guidance).*¹⁴

*Al-Mabdaʾ wal-Maʿād (Concerning the First Principle and the Return).*¹⁵

*Majmūʿ Rasāʾil ash-Shaykh ar-Raʾīs (A Collection of the Essays of ash-Shaykh ar-Raʾīs).*¹⁶

*An-Najāt (The Deliverance).*¹⁷

*Rasāʾil ash-Shaykh ar-Raʾīs fī Asrār al-Ḥikma al-Mashriqiyya (Essays of ash-Shaykh ar-Raʾīs Concerning the Secrets of Oriental Wisdom).*¹⁸

*Risāla Adhawiyya fī Amr al-Maʿād (The Adhā Essay Concerning the Issue of the Return).*¹⁹

Being aware that there is more than one way of analyzing and translating a text, I will point out the procedures I have followed in this regard and the reasons for them.

(1) To analyze a text is to break it down into its parts and to examine these parts and their relation to each other. One may, for example, break down a text into subjects, or groups of ideas. One may also break it down further into ideas, or the components of subjects, and take up these ideas one by one. To help the reader follow Ibn Sīnā's line of thought in the translation and to insure an in-depth study of the work, I have chosen to follow the original division of the text into three subjects and then divide these subjects into their simple components. A careful reading of the text, however, will reveal that I have not merely analyzed the ideas as they are in the text but also examined them thoroughly in light of Ibn Sīnā's other works (see, for example, the discussion on the nature and degrees of pleasure and that on the soul and the numerous notes to Ibn Sīnā's other works).

(2) I have placed in brackets expressions added to the text to clarify or fill a gap. One may put in brackets every single word in the translation for which there is no exact parallel in the original text. One may also put in brackets only those words that fill a gap or make a difference in the meaning of the text. I have chosen the latter way in order not to make the text more difficult to read by cluttering it with unnecessary marks. To convey in an English sentence the meaning of an Arabic sentence, one may have to include in the former words for which there is no parallel in the latter. But unless the use of words changes the

14. *Hidāya*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbduh (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhira al-Ḥadītha, 1974).

15. *MM*, ed. ʿAbd Allah Nurani (Teheran: 1984).

16. *Majmūʿ*, ed. ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ahmad al-ʿAlawī (Haydar Abad: Dāʾirat al-Maʾārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, AH 1354).

17. *An-Najāt*, ed. Majid Fakhry (Beirut: Dār al-ʿĀfaq al-Jadida, 1985).

18. *Rasāʾil*, ed. Mikhaʾīl Mehren (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1889–94).

19. *Adhawiyya*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1949).

meaning or adds anything to the original sentence, there is no need to indicate the use of such words.

(3) The English equivalents of Arabic technical terms are provided with no mention of the latter except where it was felt that the English term might not be sufficient to give the idea. In such cases, the Arabic term is placed in parentheses following the English. To mention every technical Arabic term, especially when the translation of such a term is commonly accepted by others in the field, is again to crowd a difficult text with unnecessary marks and foreign terms.

(4) A glance at the translation will immediately reveal that all the titles of chapters have been added to the original text. While inclusion of more parentheses, brackets, and Arabic technical terms may break the flow of the text or impair concentration on the subject matter and is unnecessary for conveying the meaning, inclusion of titles is different. The titles should cause no disruption in the flow of the text or in concentration on it, since they are introduced between two chapters, not in the middle of a chapter. Besides, they are necessary in that they not only add clarification to the text but also make it possible to form a table of contents to enable the reader to locate information.

(5) The page numbers of Dunyā's edition appear in the text within parentheses. The punctuation and sentence and paragraph division used in the Arabic edition have been ignored, as the meaning for the most part dictates that a difference be made in this regard.

(6) Finally, in translating certain technical terms in the text, I was fully aware of shifting occasionally from their ordinary usage. From the fact that certain terms are used ordinarily or by certain sufis in certain ways one cannot conclude that Ibn Sīnā used them in the same way. Only a very careful reading of the text and a great sensitivity to the Arabic language could determine the way in which Ibn Sīnā used certain terms. It is true, for example, that *miskīn* is usually used in the sense of 'poor' or 'wretched' in a general way, but the context in which Ibn Sīnā uses the term in the Eighth Class indicates that he is using it in a narrow sense to mean 'mentally poor' or 'mentally wretched.' The passage containing the term is addressed to one who fails to understand Ibn Sīnā's point of view. That is why I have translated the term as 'feeble-minded,' a rare but acceptable usage of the word. Also, even though *al-irāda* is usually translated as 'will,' translating it this way in the Ninth Class is problematic. There, *al-irāda* is said to be a step in a movement, as are spiritual exercise, conjunction, and so on. It is better to translate it as 'willingness' for two reasons. First, willingness would be parallel to other steps in this movement. Second, translating it as 'will' may be misleading because it may be interpreted to refer to a faculty, which is what the will is usually thought to be, but which is not what is being asserted in the text. I have specified in the notes to

the translation my reasons for translating some other technical terms in the way I did and why it would be dangerous to translate them differently. I made every effort to translate the technical terms with deep sensitivity to the accurate meaning of the text, which cannot be fully determined without placing the work in the context of Ibn Sīnā's general philosophy.

Analysis of the Text

The Nature of Happiness

The Eighth Class, which is further divided into nineteen short chapters, is primarily concerned with showing that happiness or the highest pleasure is a state resulting from goodness. The class opens by an attack on the common view that the highest pleasures are those of the external senses, while other pleasures are weak and nothing but objects of the imagination. This common view is considered a delusion. The reason given is that even though sensual pleasures, such as having sex and eating food, are among the strongest of the pleasures of the external senses, one would still reject them were it a matter of a choice between them and something like victory in a game of chess or backgammon – victory being a nonsensual pleasure. Ibn Sīnā maintains that even a hungry hunting dog would prefer giving his master the prey he has captured to eating it himself. These examples show that both in human beings and in other animals 'the internal pleasures are higher than those of the senses.'¹ A rhetorical question is then asked: 'if the internal pleasures are greater than the external ones, even though the former are not intellectual, then what would you think of the intellectual pleasures?'² Note that the internal and intellectual pleasures have already been described sometimes as 'higher than those of the senses' and sometimes as 'greater than those of the senses'³ – in either case, what is meant is that internal and intellectual pleasures are better than those of the senses. However, the only thing one can conclude so far is that internal and intellectual pleasures are preferable to those of the senses or sensual pleasures.⁴ The premise underlying Ibn Sīnā's view is

1. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, p. 751.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. The meaning of 'preferable' can be gathered from the following: An animal is said to prefer the existence and preservation of something if that thing is beneficial to it. This beneficial aspect of an object is what makes it naturally pleasurable to that animal (*An-Nafs*, p. 205). Why the internal and intellectual pleasures are said to be more beneficial, and hence preferable or more pleasurable, for a being that has them than the sensual pleasures will be considered later.

that whatever is preferable is better. This view is based on the Aristotelian notion that to be good is to be desirable and vice versa. This amounts to saying that to be better is to be more desirable – or as Ibn Sīnā would say, 'preferable' – and to be more desirable is to be better.

To go back to Ibn Sīnā's claim that internal pleasures are better than sensual or external pleasures, it must be mentioned that nowhere in his writings does Ibn Sīnā tell us which faculties enjoy these internal pleasures or what exactly he means by these pleasures. However, a general understanding of his notion of the various parts of the human soul and their functions together with what has already been stated helps us allocate these pleasures to the proper faculties and sheds some light on the general meaning of these pleasures. The human soul is said to consist of three main parts: the plant power, the animal power, and the rational power.⁵ These powers are also referred to as 'souls.' The plant soul is responsible for growth, nutrition, and reproduction, and is the lowest power of the human soul. The animal soul divides into two main branches: the sensitive, or intellective, and the active. The sensitive branch is further divided into the five known external senses, and into the internal senses, of which there are also five. The latter are the common sense, the representational faculty, the imagination, the estimative faculty, and the memory.⁶ The active branch consists of the locomotive faculty, which is responsible for movement; and the desiderative faculty, which desires to approach what it considers good for itself and to avoid what it considers harmful.⁷ The rational soul also has two parts: the practical intellect, whose function is to grasp the particular principles and manage the body; and the theoretical intellect, whose function is to grasp the universal principles.

What is referred to as 'intellectual pleasure' belongs to the theoretical intellect, as will be shown later. It is clear from the rhetorical question posed earlier that pleasures of this kind are higher than the internal

5. According to Ibn Sīnā, what is called 'soul' (*'an-nafs'*) can be considered from the point of view of its being a substance – that is, inasmuch as it is an independent entity, or to put it in Ibn Sīnā's own words, inasmuch as it is 'a form not in a subject' (*An-Nafs*, p. 29; for proofs of the substantiality of the entity under consideration, see *Sa'āda*, in *Majma'*, pp. 5ff) – or from the point of view of its having a relation of management to the body. It is only under the latter consideration that it is called 'soul.' In other words, when Ibn Sīnā talks about the soul, he does not talk about an independent thing but about a thing that has a relation to matter and movement. 'That is why,' he writes, 'the body is an element in the definition of the soul, as is the building in the definition of the builder. This is so in spite of the fact that the building does not enter the definition of the builder inasmuch as the builder is a human being' (*An-Nafs*, p. 10).

6. For an enumeration of the faculties of the various parts of the soul, see *An-Nafs*, pp. 39ff and *Ishārāt, Part Three*, pp. 373–86. See also *An-Nafs*, pp. 39ff for an elaboration of the faculties of the plant soul; pp. 58ff for an elaboration of the external senses; and pp. 152–4 and 159ff for an elaboration of the internal senses.

7. *An-Nafs* pp. 51 and 195.

pleasures. So the internal pleasures, which we are trying to identify, cannot belong to the theoretical intellect but must belong rather to a lower faculty or faculties. Nor can the internal pleasures, being by definition internal, belong to the external senses, which are by definition external. Also, the internal pleasures cannot belong to the external senses because they are higher than those of the external senses. Furthermore, being higher than the pleasures of the external senses, internal pleasures cannot belong to the plant soul because the external senses are higher than those of vegetation. Therefore, internal pleasures are higher than those of vegetation. It remains that internal pleasures belong to the practical intellect, the internal senses, and the active branch of the animal soul.

Having learned that there is a hierarchy of pleasures, we must inquire as to the reason or reasons behind this hierarchy. In other words, we must find out why some pleasures are higher than some others. To do so, we must first inquire about the nature of pleasure as such. Pleasure is defined as the apprehension and acquisition of that which, from the point of view of the apprehender, is a good or perfection.⁸ Throughout this analysis of the notion of pleasure and other related ideas, it might be helpful to keep in mind the meaning of the following terms of this definition: 'apprehension,' 'good,' and 'perfection.' We begin with the meaning of 'apprehension.' According to Ibn Sīnā, X is apprehended by Y if the reality of X is represented to Y such that Y observes this reality with the instrument by which Y observes an object. This is so whether this reality is (1) the same as that of X when X is external to the instrument by which Y observes X at the time of observing or (2) just an image of the reality of X when X is external to the instrument by which Y observes at the time of observing. If (1) were required for apprehension, then geometrical figures, whose realities do not coincide with the realities of external things, could not be apprehended. But we know that they can be. It remains that, so long as (2) is available, apprehension is possible.⁹ It is important to note that in his analysis of pleasure, Ibn Sīnā uses 'awareness' ('*shu'ār*'), in the sense of general awareness, synonymously with 'apprehension'.¹⁰

As for the meaning of 'good,' Ibn Sīnā clearly states that a thing is good from the point of view of, or in relation to, a being if it is the proper perfection of that being and something toward which that being naturally moves.¹¹ Perfection is something whose existence gives actuality to what a thing is supposed to be.¹² There are, however, two types

of perfection: primary and secondary. The former is what gives actuality to the species, as shape gives actuality to the sword. The latter is what gives actuality to the actions and reactions that follow upon the species, as does cutting for the sword.¹³ The latter type of perfection is called secondary even though it belongs (in the sense of attaching, not in the sense of uniquely or properly belonging) to the species, because the species does not require for its actuality the actuality of this type of perfection.¹⁴ The proper perfection of a thing, which has been said above to be the good of a thing, is the primary perfection of that thing.

In contrast to pleasure, pain is defined as the apprehension and acquisition of that which, from the point of view of the apprehender, is an evil or a defect¹⁵ – evil being the contrary of good and defect the contrary of perfection. One would expect here a statement parallel to the one made regarding pleasure, namely, one to the effect that a thing which is evil from the point of view of, or in relation to, a being is a defect, an imperfection, or a lack of the proper perfection of that being and something which that being naturally avoids. But no such statement is made here, perhaps because at this point the focus is on pleasure and its elements. It seems that a very brief explication of pain is presented only by way of helping the reader understand better its contrast, that is, pleasure.

It is clear from the above that pleasure requires two necessary conditions: the apprehension or awareness of something viewed by the apprehender as good, and the acquisition or attainment of this good by the apprehender. The reader may object, saying: 'But sometimes we acquire things that we consider good, such as health and safety, yet do not feel any pleasure in their acquisition.' Ibn Sīnā's response would be that if a sensible state, such as health or safety, persists, we become numb to its presence and hence unaware of it.¹⁶ But awareness, as already stated, is a necessary condition for pleasure. Ibn Sīnā continues that, if, on the other hand, you take as an example somebody whose health has been interrupted by a long sickness, you will notice that on recovering, such a person becomes aware of the state of health and hence experiences a great pleasure in being healthy.¹⁷ Again, the reader may object, saying: 'Sometimes we may acquire a pleasurable object, yet not only have no pleasure in it, as in the above-mentioned case of health, but even dislike it, as some sick people dislike sweets.' The reason for this, Ibn Sīnā asserts, is that such 'objects are not good in

8. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 753.

9. *Ishārāt*, Part Two, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1950), pp. 359–66.

10. See, for example, *Ishārāt*, Part Four, pp. 753–8.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 757.

12. See, for example, *An-Nafs*, p. 8.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 754.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 758.

17. *Ibid.*

this state since the senses are not aware of them inasmuch as they are good.¹⁸ Two comments regarding the last point are here in order.

First, it is somewhat curious that Ibn Sīnā answers this objection by saying 'such objects are not good in this state.' One would expect him to say instead 'such objects are not pleasurable in this state.' After all, to him, awareness that something is good is necessary for that thing to be pleasurable and not for it to be good. In no place does he assert that a thing cannot be good for another unless that other is aware of the goodness of the former for it. On the contrary, he makes clear that it is possible for a human being, for example, to be unaware that it is good for him to know such and such, but that this unawareness has no impact on the goodness of the person's knowing such and such for him. One can only assume, therefore, that the word 'good' in the phrase 'such objects are not good in this state' is the result of negligence either on the part of Ibn Sīnā or on the part of his scribes.

Second, aṭ-Ṭūsī believes that the purpose of the answer to the last objection is to show that there is no pleasure if there is no 'acquisition of perfection or good.'¹⁹ Of course, such acquisition is asserted by Ibn Sīnā to be one of the conditions for pleasure. However, this condition for pleasure is not asserted in this answer. Rather, the condition of acquisition is assumed at the beginning of the objection.²⁰ Furthermore, the reason given in this answer for not finding such objects pleasurable is exactly the fact that in such a state, the senses are unaware of the goodness of such objects. In other words, the purpose of answering the last objection this way is again to show that if the condition of awareness is lacking, pleasure is also lacking. This answer, though, does not merely repeat the answer to the previous objection. While the present answer asserts, as does the one before it, the necessity of the condition of awareness, it also points out that the cause of the lack of this condition is not always the same. Thus, the result of this lack is not always the same. For example, in the previous case, the cause is the persistence of a physical state, while in the present case, the cause is a sickness. That is why the result of the previous case is no desire for the good, while in the present case, the result is a dislike of the good.

In other words, one of the conditions of having pleasure in a thing is being aware that that thing is good for you. And one condition for being so aware is that you are healthy and unpreoccupied. This is so because the unhealthy is like one who is sick to the stomach, and the preoccupied is like one who is full and cannot enjoy delicious food. If the impediments to awareness – impediments such as unhealth and

preoccupation – are removed, one will feel pleasure at acquiring that thing and pain at not acquiring it.²¹

However, Ibn Sīnā stresses that even absolute knowledge or certainty, let alone general awareness, that a thing is pleasurable is not sufficient for having pleasure in that thing when it is present and for desiring it when it is absent. What is further required is the attainment of it, or experience (*dhawq*) that it is pleasurable. A person who is born sexually impotent, for example, may know (from all that he has seen, heard, and read) that sexual union is pleasurable.²² But this knowledge by itself does not enable him to feel pleasure in sexual union or to desire it when he does not have it.²³ The same is true of the blind with respect to beautiful pictures and the deaf with respect to harmonious tunes.²⁴ The same is true with regard to pain. Knowing that something is painful is not sufficient for finding that thing painful. One also has to experience the pain to feel it and become cautious of it. For example, a person who has not experienced having a fever does not find having a fever painful and is not cautious of it even though he may know that it is painful.²⁵ This is a reiteration of the view that both pleasure and pain require two conditions, that of knowledge or general awareness and that of attainment or experience.

The conditions that make a thing pleasurable have now been established. Remaining to be answered is the original question, namely: Why is it that one thing is more pleasurable than some other thing? It must be said that, according to Ibn Sīnā, every pleasurable thing causes in the apprehender a perfection that is good for the apprehender.²⁶ For example, sugar, which is a pleasurable thing, gives the organ of taste, under normal circumstances, the quality of sweetness that, according to Ibn Sīnā, is a perfection or a good of this organ. However, this perfection or good, whose presence is the pleasure itself, need not be caused by something external. You may imagine that you are tasting sugar, and this could give your organ of taste the same quality of sweetness or perfection it derives from sugar. In other words, the presence of the external object is not necessary for producing the above-mentioned perfection. The same is true for all the external senses. Their perfection or pleasure can be caused either by an external or by an internal object. Light, for example, whether from the sun or from the imagination, induces pleasure in sight.

21. Ibid., pp. 760–1.

22. Of course, the idea is that sexual union is pleasurable with a certain person and under certain circumstances. Rape, for example, which involves sexual union, is invariably unpleasurable for the victim.

23. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, p. 761.

24. *Ilāhiyyāt, II*, p. 424.

25. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, pp. 761–2.

26. Ibid., p. 762.

18. Ibid., p. 759.

19. 'Commentary,' published with *Ishārāt, Part Four*, in Dunyā's edition, p. 759.

20. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, p. 759.

However, whether the cause of the perfection or pleasure of the senses is external or internal, it is particular and material. In the case of an internal sense, such as the estimative power, the cause of its perfection is never present externally, yet it is still particular and material, and still extends a certain quality to the power apprehending it – a quality that constitutes a perfection of this power. The perfection of the estimative power, for example, consists of this power's acquisition of the same disposition as that of the subject to which this power aspires. The same can be said about the animal powers, such as the irascible one. Its perfection consists of its acquisition of a certain quality of its subject (this subject being also particular and material), the quality of dominance or perception that the subject of anger is harmed.

The perfection of the rational soul is this soul's acquisition of the proper quality of its subject – this subject being God, the First Truth, and the rest of the whole of existence. The quality that the rational soul acquires from the First Truth is clarity, inasmuch as this soul can attain or represent in itself the clarity of the First Truth. The quality that it acquires from the rest of the whole of existence is universality, which is apart from materiality.²⁷ After taking on the quality of clarity from the First Truth, it moves on to have the representation of the quality of the following entities in the following order: the celestial intelligences, the celestial souls, the celestial bodies, and, finally, the natural objects. However, the representation of these various objects is of their very essences and has no concern with materiality. In other words, contrary to sense apprehension, which is concerned with materiality, intellectual apprehension grasps nothing but the essence of a thing. Another difference between the two kinds of apprehension, which is due to the above difference, is that the objects of intellectual apprehension are unlimited in number, while the objects of the sense apprehension are limited, multiplying and diminishing only in intensity.

To determine the degree of pleasure of a certain state, one must take two factors into consideration: the apprehension and its object.²⁸ The present text does not detail the conditions under which these two factors can lead to a higher degree of pleasure. However, in some of Ibn Sīnā's other works, such conditions are further elaborated, though their number is not always the same. Here is a list of these conditions as they are presented, for example, in *Risāla fī an-Nafs wa-Baqā'ihā wa-Ma'ādhīhā*.²⁹ Note that a third factor, the quality of the apprehender, is added there. A pleasure is said to be stronger or higher than another

if: (1) the apprehension of the former is stronger or higher than the apprehension of the latter; (2) the apprehension of the former is of the essence of the object while that of the latter is of the exterior aspect of the object; (3) the object of the former is larger in number than that of the latter; (4) the object of the former is of a higher quality than that of the latter; (5) the object of the former is more permanent than that of the latter; and finally, (6) the apprehender in itself is more complete or better in the former case than the apprehender in the latter case.³⁰

To recapitulate, pleasure requires two necessary conditions: apprehension and acquisition of what actualizes or completes the proper perfection of a thing. Because each of these two conditions can vary, the resulting pleasure can also vary. The stronger and deeper the apprehension and the more valuable and more numerous the objects responsible for actualizing the proper perfection, the higher the pleasure.

It is worth mentioning that, according to Ibn Sīnā, everything naturally desires its proper perfection or pleasure, no matter how strong or weak that perfection or pleasure is. The rational soul, for example, naturally desires knowledge, which is its proper perfection. However, sometimes the soul does not feel this desire which has been implanted in it by nature. The cause of this lack of desire is never the perfection itself, but something else that stands in the way and prevents the soul from exercising its desire. This is the bodily preoccupations, which are 'reactions and dispositions that adhere to the soul due to its closeness to the body.'³¹ These preoccupations not only prevent the soul from desiring and enjoying its perfection, but also prevent it from feeling the pain at not having this perfection or at having the opposite of this perfection. The reason is that they blind the soul by preoccupying it with material attachments such that it would have no power to accept its perfection or even realize that it is missing this perfection. As stated, awareness that the perfection is missing or that something unsuitable is being experienced is necessary for pain. The bodily preoccupations cut off the soul from what is good for it and, with that, there is no pleasure. However, they also cut off its awareness that this good must be there and is not and, with that, there is no pain.

It must be pointed out that, even though these preoccupations are not the source of the pain resulting from the realization that one's perfection is not attained or is missing, nevertheless they are the source of another type of pain to be experienced after death. If these preoccupations persist in the soul even after its separation from the body, they will be the source of severe pain. This is not because they now allow

27. Ibid., p. 764.

28. Ibid., p. 767.

29. For the purpose of clarification, this list has been slightly modified, not in the number of conditions, but in the manner of expression. However, it is in keeping with Ibn Sīnā's view as expressed in bits and pieces in his various writings.

30. *RNBM*, in *Ahwāl*, p. 128. Compare this with *Ilāhiyyāt*, II, p. 424, and *an-Najāt*, p. 327.

31. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, pp. 769–70.

the soul to desire its perfection and be aware that it is not receiving it, but because by nature they require certain actions to satisfy them which presuppose a body. However, in the state of separation, the soul has no access to a body; therefore, it burns in a spiritual hell, yearning for what it can never achieve. This hell is much worse than the bodily hell of which religions speak,³² and definitely much worse than the state imposed on the soul in this life by the bodily preoccupations. After all, in this life, these preoccupations leave the soul in a state of limbo with neither pleasure nor pain, but in the second life, they burn it in a spiritual fire for as long as these preoccupations last.

At this point, Ibn Sīnā divides the vices of the human soul into two main types, which may be described as intrinsic or essential and extrinsic or accidental. 'Essential' is used here not in the sense of 'an existing part of the essence,'³³ but in the sense of belonging to the essence as blindness belongs to the eye. 'Accidental,' on the other hand, is used in the sense of neither being an existing part of the essence nor belonging to it in any manner.³⁴ Ibn Sīnā does not call these two types of vice 'essential' and 'accidental,' but his description of them, as we will soon see, fits with his description of essential and accidental evil.³⁵

Essential vice is that of being deficient in preparation for one's perfection, which one wishes to receive after death. This vice is not imposed on the soul after death³⁶ even though its consequence is. One has to conclude from this that since, according to Ibn Sīnā, the soul has no prior existence,³⁷ it must acquire this vice before death, whether at birth or in the course of life. Accidental vice is that of having material attachments and preoccupations that can be, and are, eventually removed from the soul after death. Hence, suffering due to this latter type will not endure eternally, but only as long as the extrinsic attachments endure. One should not rush into thinking that perhaps, by contrast, the former type of vice necessarily results in eternal suffering. In fact, at this point nothing is said about the consequences of having that type of vice. However, we will soon see that that type of vice is brought about by different causes, some of which produce eternal suffering while others do not.

32. Ibid., p. 770.

33. For clarification of that meaning of 'essential,' see *Remarks, Part One*, pp. 16-17.

34. For the various meanings of 'accidental,' see *ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

35. For his distinction between essential and accidental evil see *Ilāhiyyāt*, II, p. 416. It is worth noting that ar-Rāzī does not touch on these two types of vice as such. Rather, a jump is made from a discussion of why intellectual pleasure is higher than that of the senses to a discussion of why the highest happiness is not achieved while in the body (Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Lubāb al-Ishārāt*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥafīz sa'd 'Atīyya, Cairo: Maṭba'at as-Sa'āda, AH 1355, p. 125).

36. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, pp. 770-1.

37. For a proof of this point, see *An-Nafs*, pp. 223-4.

Before discussing the various causes of the two types of vice and the results of these types, it is worth noting that, according to Ibn Sīnā, not every soul is harmed by the intrinsic or essential vice, but only the soul that desires its perfection and does not attain it. For a soul to desire its perfection it must first have intellectual knowledge or awareness³⁸ of its perfection. Such knowledge is asserted to be not inborn but acquired. For this reason, that soul which desires its perfection must have already acquired knowledge of that perfection.³⁹ This is to say that if one does not acquire knowledge of one's proper perfection, one will not be subject to the suffering resulting from the essential vice. A clear statement of this position is given in *an-Najāt*:

Not every deficient one will have eternal misery, but only those whose intellectual power has acquired the desire for its perfection. This happens when it is demonstrated for them that it belongs to the soul to apprehend the quiddity of its perfection by acquiring knowledge of the unknown from the known and actualization of perfection. This is something that the soul does not have in its primordial nature nor in the rest of the human powers. Rather, most of these powers become aware of their perfections only after the occurrence of certain causes.⁴⁰

Thus, it is obvious that, at least in the case under consideration, ignorance is better than knowledge. To put it in Ibn Sīnā's words: "Thus, unalertness is closer to salvation than sharp discernment."⁴¹

It is important to stress that, while the suffering resulting from essential vice requires prior knowledge of one's perfection, it is not the case that whenever there is such knowledge there is also such suffering. In fact, the contrary of such suffering, that is, pleasure or happiness, also presupposes such knowledge. This brings us to the question of when such knowledge results in suffering and when it results in pleasure or happiness. In general terms, the answer is this: When, for example, knowledge dictates that such and such an object is my proper perfection, yet something prevents me from attaining this object, then suffering results. However, if nothing prevents me from attaining this object, then happiness results. Let us now break down the conditions under which these two cases obtain. In doing so, we will also be giving the reasons for the difference in rank in each of them. These conditions are more explicitly laid out in *Risāla Adhawiyya* than they are in *al-*

38. In the present text, the word used is 'tanabbuh' (alertness) (p. 772). In *Adhawiyya*, on the other hand, 'kamāl' (completeness), that is, intellectual completeness, is used instead (pp. 120-1). By intellectual completeness, is meant the completeness of that part of the intellect referred to as the theoretical intellect, which is responsible for knowledge of the universals and essences of things.

39. Ibid.

40. *An-Najāt*, p. 330, *Ilāhiyyāt*, II, p. 428. Compare this with *RNB*, in *Alḥwal*, pp. 133-4.

41. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 773.

Ishārāt. So, for a better understanding of them let us now turn to the *Risāla Adhawiyya*.

In the second life, human souls are said to fall into various classes depending on their beliefs and conduct in the present life. Let us examine these classes one by one.

(1) One class is that of the souls that are able to achieve both theoretical and moral perfection.⁴² In the present life, nothing hinders these souls from knowing the universal truths or from applying the moral principles, that is, the proper practical or particular principles. These souls enjoy absolute or unrestricted happiness in the life to come.⁴³ We can also assume that this is eternal happiness because, according to Ibn Sīnā, the only things that can change in the second life are material attachments. But this kind of happiness has nothing to do with material attachments. Rather, as we shall soon see, it belongs ultimately to the theoretical intellect, which is the seat of universals that are immaterial and eternal. In the second life, the theoretical intellect in itself can no longer undergo any change unless it is still accompanied by some bodily power.⁴⁴ Without such accompaniment, if it is deficient, it remains deficient, and if it is complete, it remains complete. This is because the theoretical intellect acquires its knowledge and, hence, its change through the external and internal senses, which are in the body.

(2) Another class is that of the souls that are able to achieve theoretical, but not moral, perfection. The moral imperfection of these souls stands between them and their objective, that is, absolute happiness, which requires their complete emancipation from the body and its preoccupations. Because these souls are not free from bodily preoccupations in the second life, and because there is no way for them to perform their preoccupying bodily acts there, and therefore, cannot fulfill the need to perform them, they are prevented from achieving the happiness that they also know and desire. This causes them great harm. However, these bodily preoccupations are not essential to them, which is why they are not harmed by these preoccupations forever. Rather, they eventually emancipate themselves from bodily preoccupations and attain the ultimate happiness.⁴⁵ We are not told, though, what causes this emancipation and how much time is required for it. Also, because in essence this bodily aspect seeks animal pleasure for which there is

no existence in the second life, this too causes the souls further harm in that life.⁴⁶

(3) A further class is that of the souls that are not able to achieve theoretical, but only moral, perfection. In the present life, these souls know that a certain perfection belongs to them, but they do not seek it. Instead, they deny it, they oppose it, and they believe its contrary. This deficiency imposes eternal suffering on these souls.⁴⁷

(4) Souls that are also deficient in theoretical perfection, yet morally perfect, constitute a further class. These souls differ from the last type in that, in the present life, they do not know their real perfection. They know their perfection only in the symbolic form presented to them by the messengers of God. Thus, they do not seek their real perfection, but only owing to ignorance, not to ungratefulness. In the second life, these souls are said to experience a slight measure of happiness proportionate to the measure of their knowledge and attainment of their perfection. However, this leaves them without absolute happiness since their knowledge and attainment of their perfection are not complete. They are also unable to experience absolute suffering. After all, they do not perceive their real perfection and, hence, cannot desire it and seek it essentially. Therefore, they cannot suffer for not having it, as the hungry person would suffer for not having food, which he perceives to be good for him and which he desires. Furthermore, these souls cannot be harmed by the natural aspects that are contrary to their essence; as we have already said, they are morally perfect.⁴⁸

(5) A further class is that of other souls that also do not achieve theoretical, but only moral, perfection. In their present life, these souls do not know their proper perfection simply because they are dull-minded, as are the unalert (*bulh*) and the youngsters (*ṣubḡān*).⁴⁹ They suffer a fate similar to that of the souls of the previous class, in that they experience neither absolute suffering nor absolute happiness.⁵⁰ Like the souls in the last class, these souls cannot desire having their perfection, for how could a soul desire having what it does not know or consider to be good for itself? Hence, these souls cannot suffer over

42. Compare this with al-Fārābī, *al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*, ed. Albert Nasrī Nādir (Beirut: al-Maṭba'a al-Kathūlūkiyya, 1959), pp. 112–13.

43. *Adhawiyya*, p. 120.

44. For an example of such an instance, see (5) in the following discussion of the classes of the souls in the life to come.

45. *Adhawiyya*, p. 120.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 120–1.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 121. Compare this with *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 773. Notice that what *Adhawiyya* refers to as opposition to the proper perfection the present text calls 'negligence.' The other two descriptions are the same.

48. *Adhawiyya*, p. 121.

49. In *al-Ishārāt*, only the unalert are classified thus. The youngsters as such are not mentioned. This is the same as in *RNB*, in *Abwāl*, p. 138. This is perhaps due to the fact that the meaning of 'youngsters,' as used in such context, is close to that of 'unalert.' We are told that by 'youngsters' is intended 'the intellectually immature, that is, the people of this world and of the body,' whether or not they are physically young (*MM*, p. 114). Another word used to describe this group of souls is 'ignorant' (*jāhila*) (*ibid.*).

50. *Adhawiyya*, p. 121.

desiring their perfection. In other words, because of their inability to know their perfection and, hence, their inability to desire having it, they cannot suffer absolutely. Again, like the souls in the last class, these souls cannot be harmed by the natural aspects that are contrary to their essence since they, too, are morally perfect. Also, the souls in this class cannot have absolute happiness because they are unable to know or grasp their perfection, but grasping their perfection is necessary for absolute happiness.

These souls, it must be remembered, have no grasp of realities. But while the grasping of realities is considered by Ibn Sīnā as necessary only for happiness, it is considered by some other thinkers as necessary also for continued existence. On the basis of the latter point of view, some thinkers, such as Alexander of Aphrodisias and al-Fārābī, came to the conclusion that these souls are eventually destroyed.⁵¹ Ibn Sīnā disagrees with Alexander and al-Fārābī, citing in his support the view of Themistius, who, he says, disagrees with Alexander in this regard.⁵²

Even though he states in *Risāla Adhawiyya* that these souls achieve neither absolute happiness nor absolute misery, Ibn Sīnā takes every opportunity to assert that they cannot simply disappear from existence either, because all rational souls – and these are among them – are eternal. Ibn Sīnā feels he had already proven this.⁵³ However, Ibn Sīnā is not satisfied with criticizing Alexander of Aphrodisias, whom he points out by name, and others such as al-Fārābī for believing that such souls are eventually destroyed.⁵⁴ He goes further in *al-Ishārāt* and elsewhere, attributing to these souls the possibility of absolute happiness as well. The text of *al-Ishārāt*, for example, asserts that the unalert may eventually reach the preparation for conjunction with the ultimate realities, a conjunction that gives the knowers' happiness.⁵⁵ We already know that Ibn Sīnā believes this to be the absolute or highest form of happiness a human soul can enjoy.

Is this position in contradiction with the idea in *Risāla Adhawiyya*, as expressed above, namely, that these souls do not attain absolute happiness (the kind of happiness in question)? It does not look like it.

51. For the former's view, see *Aristū 'ind al-'Arab*, ed. 'Abd ar-Rahmān Badawī (Cairo: Maktabat an-Nahda al-Maṣriyya, 1947), p. 120, and *Sā'ada*, in *Rasā'il*, p. 15; for the latter's view, see al-Fārābī, *al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*, p. 118.

52. *Sā'ada*, in *Rasā'il*, p. 15.

53. *Ishārāt*, Part Three, p. 430. See also *RNBM*, in *Aḥwāl*, pp. 103–4.

54. See *Adhawiyya*, p. 122, where Ibn Sīnā says the following: 'It necessarily follows from Alexander's doctrine that the souls that are absolutely deficient are destroyed with the destruction of the body. But this is untrue, and it is not the Aristotelian view.' As for al-Fārābī, even though he is not mentioned by name, we know that he too held this view (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*, p. 118). We also know that Ibn Sīnā was quite familiar with al-Fārābī's works.

55. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 778.

Rather, it seems that the relative level of happiness that the *Risāla Adhawiyya* attributes to these souls is just a stage in their journey beyond.

Another higher stage, that of absolute happiness, is also possible under certain conditions. Even though these conditions are not elaborated in *al-Ishārāt*, but only hinted at, it is made clear there that the level of happiness attributed to these souls in *Risāla Adhawiyya* is also advocated, but not necessarily as the final stage. The relevant text of *al-Ishārāt* reads:

Regarding the unalert, if they raise themselves above imperfection, they will be set free from the body and will reach the happiness that befits them. But perhaps even in this state of relative happiness, they do not dispense with the existence of a body which is the subject of their imagination. It is not impossible that this body be a celestial body or the like. Perhaps this leads them eventually to the preparation for the happiness-causing conjunction that the knowers enjoy.⁵⁶

Three ideas are expressed in the above passage. First, if the souls under consideration are morally perfect when they leave this life, they receive a degree of joy appropriate to their moral condition. This is the state of relative happiness mentioned in *Risāla Adhawiyya*. This state cannot involve absolute happiness because it does not involve representation of the eternal realities. Nor can it involve absolute suffering, because these souls do not realize that they lack such representation, which is their perfection, a realization that would cause them absolute suffering. Second, it is possible for these souls to move from relative happiness to the preparation for absolute happiness that is enjoyed only by the knowers. Third, the preparation of these souls for absolute happiness is achieved as a result of their using a certain kind of body as subjects of their imagination. How this preparation happens Ibn Sīnā does not make clear in *al-Ishārāt*.

In a passage of *al-Mabḍā' wal-Ma'ād*, however, Ibn Sīnā elaborates further how this preparation is achieved:

If these souls depart from the body – while having attachments to the body and having no attachments to what is superior to the body (reflection on which, and attachment to which, necessitates distraction of them from bodily things); rather, if these souls are mere ornaments of their bodies and do not know anything but bodies and bodily things – then it is possible that the kind of their desire for the body attaches them to some bodies to which it belongs that such souls attach. This is because these souls naturally seek attachment to bodies, and those bodies are prepared for receiving these souls. However, those bodies are neither human nor animal bodies, as we have mentioned elsewhere. If these souls attach to human or animal bodies, they

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 378–9.

will be nothing other than proper souls for such bodies.⁵⁷ It is possible, therefore, that the bodies to which these souls attach are celestial bodies.⁵⁸ This is not such that these souls become souls or managers of those bodies, for that is impossible. Rather, these souls use those bodies for the possibility of imagination. These souls then imagine the forms that were believed, that is, in the present life, by their imagination and are still in their minds.⁵⁹ If, in itself and in action, their imagination adheres to the good and what necessitates happiness, they will witness the good.⁶⁰

It must be mentioned that the above view is attributed to someone whose words are not unmeasured.⁶¹ It is clear, though, that Ibn Sīnā himself considers this view plausible. First, he praises the thinker to whom he attributes this view, as the last statement of the passage indicates.⁶² Second, in no place does he criticize this view. Third, he sometimes introduces it by saying: It is likely (*yushbih*) that the following view is true.⁶³ Fourth, he repeats it elsewhere as part of the presentation of his own view and without attributing it to others. He does this sometimes vaguely⁶⁴ and sometimes not so vaguely.⁶⁵

In any case, the passage cited above from *al-Mabda' wal-Ma'ād* brings out the following points:

First, if the so-called unaltered soul leaves the body when it still has attachments to the body, it will naturally desire attachment to a body. The phrase 'when it still has attachments to the body' is somewhat curious. It leaves one under the impression that it is possible for this type of soul to leave the body without such attachments. But according to this theory as presented by Ibn Sīnā such a soul has no option but to leave the body with bodily attachments.⁶⁶ These attachments are due to the power of imagination (an animal or bodily power), which is carried to the second life by the rational soul of that type of person.⁶⁷ The reason why the rational soul of that type of person carries the power of imagination with it after its departure from the body is

57. The idea is that this is impossible; otherwise, transmigration would be possible. But for reasons that will be given shortly, the possibility of transmigration is rejected.

58. Ibn Sīnā states a little later that such bodies may also be 'generated from air, smoke or vapor.' (*MM*, p. 115).

59. Text: *wahmib*.

60. *MM*, pp. 114–15. This whole passage is also cited with some variation by al-Ṭūsī in 'Commentary,' pp. 778–9. For a similar discussion of this theory, see *RNBM* in *Aḥwāl*, pp. 138–9, and *Ilāhiyyāt*, II, pp. 431–2. The last work mentioned, like *Risala Adhawiyya*, discusses the stage of relative happiness of these souls but does not touch upon the possibility of their reaching the preparation for absolute happiness.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

63. As in *RNBM*, in *Aḥwāl*, p. 138.

64. As in the passage from *al-Ishārāt* cited above.

65. As in *RMNN*, in *Aḥwāl*, p. 187.

66. See, for example, *Adhawiyya*, p. 123.

67. *Ibid.*

perhaps the following. When this rational soul departs from the body, it is void of any representation of the truth, the only thing that can give it independence of matter. Rather it departs as a mere potential rational soul. As such, it is similar to matter in that it is potential and requires the accompaniment of an animal power as an instrument to aid it in its actualization in a manner that will be made clear later – this instrument being the imagination.

Second, this soul's natural desire for the body may lead it to attach itself to a certain type of body that is prepared for accepting it. This body cannot be a human or an animal body; otherwise, this soul would be leaving its body only to return to the same type of body. But this kind of return, known as transmigration, is impossible from Ibn Sīnā's point of view. This is because, according to him, the coming into existence of any human or animal body necessitates the simultaneous emanation from the separate or higher causes of a soul for that body.⁶⁸ If so, then if a soul leaves body A and returns to body B, body B will have two souls: the one that emanated to it simultaneously with its coming into existence and the other that came to it from body A. But it is impossible for one body to have two souls. After all, the function of the soul is to administer the affairs of the body.⁶⁹ If a body has two souls, then one would be its administrator and the other would not. The latter, therefore, would not be the soul of that body.⁷⁰

Third, Ibn Sīnā concludes from the above that the type of body to which such a soul attaches after its separation from the human body is a celestial body or a body close to that in temperament. He does not state a clear reason. However, one is left under the impression that his line of thought is the following: The only types of body capable of hosting a rational soul are the human or animal body, the celestial body, and one that neighbors these two in temperament. The first has been ruled out by the rejection of transmigration. The second and third remain as alternatives.

Soon enough, though, we find out that the argument against transmigration is also used as an argument against such a soul's ability to function after separation as a soul even for the celestial body to which it attaches. It seems that the idea is that any living body, whether earthly or heavenly, has a proper soul and cannot accept another as a soul. In other words, Ibn Sīnā's argument against transmigration seems to be an argument against the possibility of a soul functioning anywhere as a soul after it leaves its body. This is an argument against a broader

68. *RNBM*, in *Aḥwāl*, p. 106.

69. *Ishārāt*, Part Three, p. 354. See also *RMNN*, in *Aḥwāl*, p. 186.

70. This is one of the two arguments that Ibn Sīnā uses against the theory of transmigration. It is the simpler and the clearer argument, and the one he uses more often than the other. For a detailed discussion of the other, see al-Ṭūsī, 'Commentary,' pp. 780–2.

sense of physical transmigration than the one used above, which appears to be limited to transmigration into animal bodies. We are left with the following question: In what manner then does such a soul attach itself to a celestial body if not as a soul?

Fourth, the answer to this question is touched upon in the relevant passages cited above from *al-Ishārāt* and *al-Mabda' wal-Ma'ād*, but with much vagueness, especially in the former passage. In these two passages, Ibn Sīnā states that such a soul attaches itself to a celestial body or the like in the manner of making use of that body for the purpose of exercising its imagination. But how this is done is not pointed out in these two passages. However, the end of *Risāla Adhawiyya* offers a clue. There, Ibn Sīnā presents a theory concerning this matter, yet with no indication that he himself may adhere to it. This theory is simply attributed to others whose identity is left unknown, but we know that its conclusion is adopted by Ibn Sīnā elsewhere.⁷¹ According to this theory, the impossibility of transmigration does not necessitate the impossibility of some soul joining another soul; that is, while transmigration or full attachment of a soul to another body is impossible, it is possible for such a soul to have spiritual or partial attachment to another body.⁷² To put it briefly, the only manner in which such a soul can attach itself to a celestial body or the like is through attaching itself to the soul of that body. In other words, one may say that a distinction is drawn between transmigration in the physical or full sense and transmigration in the spiritual or partial sense. It is the impossibility of the former (in the narrow sense) that prevents the return of a human soul to another human or animal body. Also, it is the impossibility of the former (in the broad sense) that prevents such a soul from acting as a soul of a celestial body. But it is the possibility of the latter that permits the human soul to leave a human body and attach itself to a celestial one or the like.

Fifth, a final point seems to be intended in the passage under consideration from *al-Mabda' wal-Ma'ād* though it is left totally vague. The joining of souls entitles the souls in question to share and strengthen their attitudes and beliefs, whatever those attitudes and beliefs may be.⁷³ If these attitudes and beliefs are good in each soul, they will become even better in each soul. For instance, if soul A joins soul B, and if both souls adhere to the good in action and in belief, then the goodness of each will multiply. This is because each retains its goodness and also now shares the goodness of the other. The opposite is also true. Therefore, if the soul under consideration joins the soul of a

celestial body when the former is virtuous and of the belief that the pleasures of the second life described in scripture are true, then the virtue and beliefs of this human soul will be strengthened if they connect with similar attitudes and beliefs of the celestial soul and weakened if they connect with the opposite. If the former happens, the soul will enjoy the highest pleasures mentioned in scripture and related by the prophets.

These pleasures cannot be attained by the external senses, but they are also below those attained by the theoretical intellect. They are attained only by the imagination and give the class of souls that attains them a middle rank.⁷⁴ The lowest rank is reserved for the souls that are immersed in sense pleasures, and the highest rank for those that are plunged into intellectual ones. With this, Ibn Sīnā feels he has confirmed the Qur'anic view concerning the states of the human souls in the second life. The *Qur'ān* mentions three ranks: that of the foremost, that of the left hand, and that of the right hand.⁷⁵ According to his interpretation, the foremost are those souls in the highest rank or that of intellectual pleasure. Those of the left hand are in the lowest rank, or that of sense pleasure. Finally, those of the right hand are in the middle rank, or that of the imaginative pleasure. Thus, Ibn Sīnā feels he has shown that philosophy and religion are in agreement over this issue.⁷⁶

The middle rank, or that of the imaginative pleasure, acts as a purgatory where the souls are cleansed of the impurities of the world of elements.⁷⁷ Nothing prevents the pleasure of such souls from

extending further until they become prepared to reach attainment of the highest rank. Thus, they plunge into the real pleasures, reaching the foremost – after they undergo the passage of lapses of time.⁷⁸

According to Ibn Sīnā, this is how the unalert can move from relative happiness to absolute happiness.

No doubt the above view leaves a number of questions unanswered, such as: If the human soul under consideration can attach itself to a celestial body, not in the manner of physical but in the manner of spiritual transmigration, then can it or can it not do the same in a human or an animal body? And, if it can, then why does it attach itself in that manner to a celestial soul instead? On the other hand, if it cannot, then why can it not? However, there is no room to investigate such questions here, because our purpose is neither to critique nor to

71. See, for example, *RMNN*, in *Aḥwāl*, p. 187.

72. *Adhawiyya*, p. 123.

73. For a clear exposition of this point, see *ibid*.

74. *RMNN*, in *Aḥwāl*, p. 187.

75. *Qur'ān*, LVI, 8–10.

76. *RMNN*, in *Aḥwāl*, p. 188.

77. *Ibid*.

78. *Ibid*.

develop this view but only to make it as clear as possible. As it is, the reader may have already lost sight of the original purpose of this discussion due to the lengthy elaboration of the state of the so-called unalert souls. Let us recall that this whole discussion of the state of the unalert souls is only a part of the discussion of the various classes of the souls in the second life, especially as Ibn Sinā outlines those classes in *Risāla Adhawiyya*. This was done by way of clarifying a few short statements in *al-Ishārāt*. If the ultimate objective of a human being is happiness in the second life, then it is important to understand whether or not a human soul can achieve that happiness and why.

Five different classes of souls in the life to come have already been covered, with the largest part of the discussion devoted to the classes of the intellectually immature. The following two classes remain.

(6) There is a class of souls that never attained either theoretical or moral perfection.⁷⁹ These souls know their perfection and, hence, experience irremovable, absolute suffering for not attaining it.⁸⁰ Since their suffering is said to be irremovable and absolute, their knowledge of their perfection must be complete.

(7) Finally, there is a class of souls that, like those in class (6), never attain either theoretical or moral perfection. However, they differ from them in that they do not know their perfection. Therefore, they do not experience either irremovable or absolute suffering but only a measure of pain proportionate to the measure of the corrupt bodily disposition they carry with them from the world of nature.⁸¹

For the sake of further clarity, a chart of the states of these souls is provided, with the following abbreviations representing the following expressions: *tp* (theoretical perfection), *ti* (theoretical imperfection), *mp* (moral perfection), *mi* (moral imperfection), *k* (knowledge of one's perfection), *nk* (no knowledge of one's perfection), *rh* (relative happiness), *ah* (absolute happiness), *rs* (relative suffering), and *as* (absolute suffering). The seven classes are then these:

- (1) *tp*, *mp*, *k*, *ah*
- (2) *tp*, *mi*, *k*, *rh* (temporarily), followed by *ah* (eternally)
- (3) *ti*, *mp*, *k*, *as*
- (4) *ti*, *mp*, *nk* (symbolic knowledge), *rh*
- (5) *ti*, *mp*, *nk* (dull-mindedness), *rh* (temporarily), followed by *ah* (eternally)
- (6) *ti*, *mi*, *k*, *as*
- (7) *ti*, *mi*, *nk*, *rs*

79. Compare this with *al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*, p. 111.

80. *Adhawiyya*, p. 121.

81. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-2.

Notice the following: Absolute happiness is allotted, whether immediately or later on, to classes (1), (2), and (5). Absolute suffering is allotted to classes (3) and (6). Classes (4) and (7) are said to have relative happiness and relative suffering respectively. However, it seems that they must have this only temporarily, as do (2) and (5). After all, the seven classes are reduced to three ranks: that of absolute happiness, that of absolute suffering, and that in the middle. Since (4) and (7) receive neither absolute happiness nor absolute suffering, they must fall in the middle rank, which seems to be a temporary state. Therefore, in the last analysis, the human soul can be in one of two states: eternal blissfulness or eternal misery.

To recapitulate, as the human soul leaves its body, it can enter either a permanent or a temporary state. The permanent state can be either one of absolute or eternal happiness or one of absolute or eternal suffering. The temporary state can be of relative happiness or of relative suffering. In either case, after some time this state is transformed into that of happiness.

The above analysis clearly shows that eternal happiness and eternal suffering, or heaven and hell, are caused by theoretical perfection and theoretical imperfection respectively. It is obvious, though, that not all theoretical imperfection leads to suffering, but only that which is accompanied by knowledge of one's perfection, as in classes (3) and (6). Moral imperfection, on the other hand, does not have a permanent effect on the ultimate state of the soul. It does have a short-term effect, as in classes (2) and (7), where moral imperfection hinders ultimate happiness, but only for a while.

Now, is it possible to have absolute happiness or the highest pleasure while in the body? The answer is no, because absolute happiness would require a total release from any bodily relation and preoccupation, which is impossible while in the body.⁸² However, if the soul reflects on its proper objects and pays as little attention to the demands of the body as being in the body allows, then it attains 'an abundant proportion of this pleasure.' A soul in this state is distracted by this pleasure so much so that it pays no attention to anything else.⁸³

If a soul that is not polluted with matter receives a spiritual voice informing it of the states of the soul after death, it will experience a desire whose cause it does not know, and a love accompanied by a pleasure that causes in it much joy. The suitable relation that this

82. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 774. See also *Sa'āda*, where the same concept is expressed as follows: 'It is appropriate that happiness, the ultimate human objective, is not attainable in itself in the sensible world. This is because the soul in this world is not prepared for achieving its best state so that it can attain its best end. Thus, happiness is sought in a realm other than this' (p. 4).

83. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 775.

soul notices between itself and these states creates in it wonder and astonishment. This experience is intense and is one of the best motives. If a soul is driven by this motive, it will not settle for anything less than the attainment of insight, which is its perfection. This attainment is the pleasurable state the knower enjoys. If, on the other hand, a soul is driven by love for praise and rivalry, it will settle for receiving just that.⁸⁴

The joy that God has in His essence is the greatest joy a being can have in anything, 'for all things, He has the strongest apprehension of an object which, of all things, has the most complete perfection – this object being free from the nature of possibility and privation which are the two sources of evil.'⁸⁵ This joy that God has in His essence is said to be God's love for His essence. After all, 'love' is defined by Ibn Sīnā as 'the joy of conceiving the presence of a certain essence.'⁸⁶ God's conception of the presence of His essence is complete, and so is His essence itself. That is why God's love for, or joy in, His essence is also complete.

Ibn Sīnā distinguishes love from 'yearning,' which is defined as 'the movement toward completing this joy.'⁸⁷ In yearning, the concept of the object is represented in the imagination, not in the senses as is a sensible object. When a being yearns for an object, this being must have already attained something of this object but missed something else of it. In other words, one does not yearn for what one fully possesses.

There are only two types of beings that love but cannot yearn. These are God and the celestial intelligences, or intellectual substances. God and His essence conceive the presence of each other to each other. That is why God enjoys and loves His essence and is enjoyed and loved by His essence. But God does not, and cannot, yearn for anything because, as stated, yearning implies some lack, and God does not lack anything. Even if no other beings conceive the presence of His essence and, therefore, love Him, He would still not lack anything. This is because He has His essence, which is fully complete. However, it must be added that other beings do love Him, as we will soon see. Due to their proximity to God, the celestial intelligences also view God's essence and, therefore, love Him. Again, they are said to be incapable of yearning. No reason for this is given, but we can assume that they also lack nothing since the object of their conception is God's essence, which is complete. However, they are ranked after God on the ladder of beings that have joy and love. The immediate question is why are

they ranked lower than God in the order of lovers even though their object has the highest degree of completeness, as does the object of God. The answer must be clear from what has preceded.⁸⁸ Love or enjoyment, which is the conception or possession of an essence, depends not only on the essence but also on the power of conception or apprehension that grasps that essence. God's object or essence and His power that grasps this object are both complete. This is not the case with the celestial intelligences, whose object is complete but whose power is not. However, it is rather curious as to why these intelligences cannot yearn even though they do not have the complete power to grasp the complete essence of God. It seems that, according to Ibn Sīnā, as long as the object present to conception is complete, no yearning is possible. This appears to be the case whether or not the power of conception or apprehension can grasp this object. The idea could be that if this power can grasp the complete object, then there is definitely no room for yearning. If, on the other hand, this power cannot grasp this object, then it cannot be aware of what it is missing. Therefore, it cannot experience yearning either.

The remaining types of lovers, which are three in number, also yearn. This means that they have already attained something of their object, since they are lovers. This gives them pleasure or joy. But since they are said to yearn they must also lack something of that object. It follows from what has been stated above that this lack is due not to an inability of the power of apprehension to grasp the object – even though this power might be characterized by such inability – but to the lack of some part or aspect of the object. The yearning lovers are these: (1) human souls that 'attain the highest ecstasy in the present life' because their face is steadily turned upward toward the divine; (2) human souls that waver between divinity and various levels of baseness; and finally, (3) souls that are steadily immersed in nature, for their stiff nature forces them to turn their faces in one direction only, downward. It must be mentioned that in this life, souls of the first type never fully attain their object. That is why in this life, they are never free from yearning. In the second life, however, they are set free from the yoke of yearning.⁸⁹ This clearly means that in the second life, these souls reach, at least, the same rank as that of the celestial intelligences since they become lovers that cannot yearn.

Ibn Sīnā ends the Eighth Class by asserting that a specific perfection belongs to every physical thing, and that every physical thing has a voluntary or natural love for that perfection and a yearning for it when

84. Ibid., pp. 776–7.

85. Ibid., p. 782.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

88. Cf., pp. 14–15.

89. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 787.

it is missing.⁹⁰ This kind of love and yearning is due to God's mercy, which is an element of His Providence. A providential God instills in every physical thing not only love for its perfection but also yearning for this perfection when it is absent. This is because yearning is a principle for moving its possessor toward the object of yearning. This yearning enables things to move in the direction of their perfection, something that any providence must dictate.

The Stations of the Knowers

The Ninth Class, which is the most original part of *al-Ishārāt wa-Tanbīhāt*, has a double purpose: first, to distinguish the object of the knower from that of the nonknower and, second, to discuss the steps through which the knower must pass in order to reach his object. Let us elaborate this distinction and these steps.

The class begins by pointing out that there are stations and ranks reserved for the knowers only. While in their bodies, these individuals can glimpse the saintly or divine world, as if they had detached themselves from their bodies.⁹¹ It is important to notice that the claim made here is not that such individuals can have such a glimpse because they detach themselves from their bodies while in their bodies, for that is impossible. Rather, they can do so for reasons that will become clear later and that will make it *as if* they were detached from their bodies. In any case, they attain exclusive knowledge of some things, which they keep to themselves, and undergo exclusive experience of some things, which they declare publicly. The former is not a matter of public controversy. After all, it is not even made public and is, therefore, unknown outside the circle of knowers. The latter is approved by those who know it and disapproved by those who do not know it.

At this point we are given a riddle to solve, namely, that of the story of Salamān and Absāl. However, all we are told about this story, which is not related to us, and of which there are historically a number of versions, is that Salamān represents the individual self of the knower and Absāl represents the rank of the knower's knowledge. It seems that Ibn Sīnā did in fact write a work titled *Salamān and Absāl*. This is confirmed by aṭ-Ṭūsī's report that in his classification of Ibn Sīnā's works, Abū 'Ubayda al-Jurjānī mentions *Salamān and Absāl* as one of

Ibn Sīnā's works.⁹² If so, Ibn Sīnā's reference to it in *al-Ishārāt* is a request to the reader to interpret this earlier work.

It is difficult to understand what is intended by this story, especially since it is missing, and since there is hardly any reference to it in Ibn Sīnā's other writings. It is no surprise, therefore, that Ibn Sīnā's enigmatic reference to it seems to have preoccupied some of his commentators owing to the challenge it posed for them. Aṭ-Ṭūsī, for example, devoted more space, energy, and time to locating and interpreting the appropriate version of this story than he did to treating any other point in *al-Ishārāt*. His commentary on this story is longer and more researched than his commentary on any other point in the rest of the work. Also, the great amount of time he spent pondering over it is evidenced by the statement he makes in his introducing the last version of this story, where he tells us: 'I have come across this story twenty years after I completed the commentary.'⁹³

Aṭ-Ṭūsī discounts a number of versions of the story and finally relates the version that he discovered last and that he considers to be the one intended by Ibn Sīnā. He seems correct in suggesting that the versions of the story that make of Salamān a royal son who falls madly in love with Absāl, who tempts him and drags him down to the flesh, are clearly not the versions intended here. After all, according to Ibn Sīnā, Absāl is said to represent the knower's rank of knowledge, not bodily attachments.⁹⁴ Rather it seems that Salamān represents the rational soul and that Absāl represents the theoretical intellect that rises through a number of states, beginning with that of potentiality, until it reaches the highest state, namely, that of knowledge – this state being the acquired intellect.⁹⁵

It may interest and benefit the reader to have a brief account of this version of the story as related by aṭ-Ṭūsī because it not only agrees with Ibn Sīnā's thought but was also attributed to him, as aṭ-Ṭūsī tells us.⁹⁶ Here is how it goes:⁹⁷

Salamān and Absāl were close brothers. Salamān was the older of the two and the ruler of the land. Absāl, who was brought up by his brother, was characterized as having excellent personal and intellectual qualities. Salamān's wife fell in love with Absāl and tried a number of tricks to draw him to her. One of her tricks was convincing Salamān to marry Absāl to her sister. She told her sister: 'I do not marry you to him so that you can have him to yourself, but only so that the two of

92. 'Commentary,' p. 796.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid., p. 795.

95. Ibid., p. 799.

96. Ibid.

97. This version can be found in *ibid.*, pp. 796-9.

90. Ibid., pp. 787-8.

91. Ibid., p. 789.

us can share him.' She also told Absāl that her sister was shy and that he should not consummate the marriage during the day or talk to her sister until she became somewhat familiar with him. The night of the wedding, Salamān's wife lay in her sister's bed. When Absāl entered the bed, she could not help but draw him to her bosom. This scared Absāl, who thought to himself that a shy woman would not do something of this sort. By that time, black clouds had darkened the skies, and lightning struck. This made it possible for Absāl to see her face. He immediately left her and decided to move away.

He went away on a military expedition, conquering some land for his brother. Finally he returned, thinking that she must have lost her love for him. But he was wrong. She expressed her love again, and again he rebuffed her. Faced with an enemy, Salamān sent his brother to head an army to defeat this adversary. By then, Salamān's wife had reached the decision that if she could not have Absāl, she must kill him. She bribed the generals of the army to abandon him in battle. They did, and the enemy won. Absāl was wounded and left to die, but a wild female animal breastfed him until he recovered.

Once again, Absāl returned to Salamān, who was surrounded by enemies and distressed by the loss of his brother. Absāl organized an army, defeated the enemy, and established his brother as king. But Salamān's wife was still determined to kill Absāl, bribing the cook and the food server to poison him. They did, and he died. Salamān fell into a deep depression over his brother's death. After appointing some trustworthy people to handle the affairs of the kingdom, he abdicated the throne. He prayed to God for knowledge of the cause of his brother's death, and God revealed to him what had happened. He then poisoned his wife, the cook, and the food server.

At-Ṭūsī gives what looks like a plausible interpretation of this story. According to his interpretation, the following characters represent the following things:

- (1) Salamān: the rational soul.
- (2) Absāl: the theoretical intellect, which rises in knowledge until it becomes the acquired intellect. "This is the rational soul's rank in knowledge if this soul rises to perfection."⁹⁸
- (3) Salamān's wife: the bodily powers responsible for the appetite and anger.
- (4) Her love for Absāl: her inclination to use the intellect to reach her worldly objectives.
- (5) Absāl's dignity: the intellect's preoccupation with the divine world.
- (6) Her sister: the practical intellect, which obeys the theoretical intel-

lect. It is not clear how the sister plays this role except perhaps inasmuch as she agrees to marry Absāl. But this she does in conspiracy with her sister in order that she herself can use him.

- (7) The wife's substituting herself for her sister: the attempt of the bodily powers to present their objectives as if they were good ones.
- (8) The lightning: the divine glimpses that appear when one is preoccupied with worldly affairs.
- (9) Absāl's rejection of the woman: the intellect's shunning of the bodily desires.
- (10) Absāl's conquest of the land for his brother: the rational soul's access to the divine world by means of the theoretical intellect and the ability of this soul to manage the body well by means of the practical intellect.
- (11) The army's abandonment of Absāl: the turning away of the external and internal senses from the intellect when the intellect turns toward the divine world.
- (12) Absāl's feeding on the wild animal's milk: the emanation of perfection to him from the superior principles that are separate from this world.
- (13) Salamān's disintegrated condition as a result of the loss of Absāl: the rational soul's disturbance at being neglected when the theoretical intellect is preoccupied with managing the body.
- (14) Absāl's return to his brother: the theoretical intellect's attention to its interests while managing the body.
- (15) The cook: the irascible power that acts on revenge.
- (16) The food server: the appetitive power that attracts whatever the body needs.
- (17) The conspiracy of the last two to destroy Absāl: a sign of the disintegration of the theoretical intellect when the bodily powers become powerful.
- (18) Salamān's destruction of the two of them: the rational soul's abandonment of the bodily powers at the end of life.
- (19) Salamān's abdication: his abandonment of the management of the body.

To return to the text of *al-Ishārāt*, a distinction is now drawn among the following: an ascetic, a worshiper, and a knower. It is said that an ascetic is one who does not indulge in worldly delights. A worshiper is one who practices prayer, fasting, and the like. A knower is one who turns his thought upward so that the divine Truth illuminates his innermost thought, by which Ibn Sīnā seems to mean the theoretical intellect. As we know, Ibn Sīnā believes it is only the theoretical intellect that can receive the divine Truth. Regarding the above three definitions,

98. See pp. 31-2.

Ibn Sīnā states that some of them 'may be combined with each other.'⁹⁹ But he does not tell us which of these definitions may combine with which. However, we can conclude from the examples given that at least asceticism and knowledge, and worship and knowledge may combine.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, there seems to be nothing that prevents the three of them from combining.

Ibn Sīnā stresses that a nonknower and a knower use asceticism and worship in different ways. A nonknower uses asceticism for the purpose of buying the delights of the life to come with the worldly delights – as if the whole thing were a business deal. A knower, on the other hand, uses asceticism as a method to elevate him above anything that distracts him from the Truth. Again, a nonknower uses worship only in order to get something beneficial in the second life, namely, a reward. It is as if he is an employee who works only in order to get a certain salary. On the contrary, the knower uses worship to train the faculties of his animal soul to acquire the habit of moving from falsehood to the Truth – such faculties being exemplified in the faculty of estimation and that of imagination, both of which interfere in the functioning of the theoretical intellect. When this training is achieved, these faculties submit to the theoretical intellect and offer no resistance to it in its reception of the Truth. This facilitates the theoretical intellect's reception of the Truth. Such reception then becomes a fixed habit that enables this intellect to look at this Truth at any moment and with no effort. This state is referred to as 'the acquired intellect.'

Even though the object sought by the nonknower ascetic and by the nonknower worshiper, that is, reward, is spoken of lightly in comparison with the object of the knower, that is, the Truth, nevertheless, the former object is also real, as well as useful and even necessary for society, as is shown by the following reasoning. Even if it is possible for human beings to manage all their personal affairs and satisfy all their needs by themselves, it is highly difficult for them to do so, particularly considering the human limitations of time and energy. Who of us can be, at the same time, a farmer, a baker, a goldsmith, a carpenter, a builder, a mailman, a tailor, and so on? People must, therefore, share and have business deals, according to which, they exchange goods and divide labor.¹⁰¹ But if these transactions are to be carried out in an orderly and a just manner, a law enforcing this manner must be imposed. Such a law cannot be imposed by just anybody, but only by a legislator who is distinguished from the others in command-

ing their obedience due to the fact that he is the only one in society who receives divine signs.

Still, a law and a legislator are not sufficient for social order and justice. There must also be reward and punishment for human action, as well as human knowledge that this is the case. This in turn necessitates human knowledge of God, the dispenser of reward and punishment, and of the legislator, who has knowledge of God's commands and prohibitions. Yet, order in society requires not only that people come to know God and the legislator, commands and prohibitions, and rewards and punishments but that they should also preserve this knowledge. To do so, they must practice and repeat worship, which is nothing other than remembrance 'of the object of worship.'¹⁰² It is this repetition that preserves knowledge about God and His prophet. Anyone practicing this worship is rewarded both here and in the life to come. Anyone who, in addition to this worship, focuses his attention on the divine side and, thus, becomes a knower is granted an additional reward limited to the knowers. Our ability to know what is expected of us, how to attain it, and how to avoid its contrary is a strong sign of God's wisdom, mercy, and grace.

The knower, on the other hand, seeks the Truth for its own sake and does not use it as the means for anything else. Furthermore, the knower worships the Truth because it is the noblest object of worship. Therefore, his worship of it stems from the fact that it is worthy of worship, not from any desire or fear. 'If desire or fear were present, the desired object or the feared object would be the motive and the object of the search.'¹⁰³ Such fear and desire cannot happen in the case of the knower, for, as has been stated, the knower's motive or end is nothing but the Truth.

However, we are reminded that even those who use the Truth as a means to something else will also receive some type of mercy that enables them to have a kind of pleasure that is lower than the ultimate pleasure of grasping the Truth. After all, they do not even seek the ultimate pleasure – for they do not know it – but only the incomplete pleasure. Compared to the knowers, these are like boys compared to serious, mature, and well experienced people. Boys, being highly preoccupied with the value of playing, pay no attention to the more valuable things that the more mature people value. Because their vision is limited to the value of playing, they resent the fact that those who are more mature are not interested in playing. They also fail to understand the reason for this lack of interest on the part of mature people. Likewise, those whose vision is limited to incomplete pleasure stick to

99. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, pp. 799–800.

100. *Ibid.*, pp. 801–2.

101. Compare this with *An-Nafs*, p. 202, and *Ilāhiyyāt, II*, pp. 441–2.

102. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, p. 806.

103. *Ibid.*, pp. 811–13.

this type of pleasure and never abandon it in this life, unless they expect to receive twice as much of it in the second life. Their worship of God is only for the purpose of being rewarded by Him with a generous amount of the incomplete pleasure of having things like good food, water, and sex. Still, if they make an effort to achieve this kind of pleasure, it will be given to them in the second life in abundance, as they were promised by the prophets.

As mentioned, the Ninth Class carries a double purpose: to distinguish the object of the knower from that of the nonknower, and to discuss the steps through which the knower must pass in order to reach his object. The first purpose has been covered. Attention will now be focused on the second purpose, the knower's steps. These steps are nine, and are preceded by two preparatory stages.

The two stages are the following: (1) Willingness, which indicates that a person is an adept. Willingness is an overwhelming desire to have a relation of conjunction with the world of sanctity. This desire is based either on demonstrative certainty or on the soul's serenity that results from the established faith. (2) Spiritual exercise (*ar-riyāda*), which is directed toward three goals: (A) avoiding the choice of anything but the Truth; (B) making the commanding or animal soul obedient to the tranquil or rational soul, as this will attract the internal senses of imagination and estimation to the ideas of the world of sanctity; and (C) rendering the innermost thought attentive. These goals are aided by different things. The first of these goals is aided by asceticism. The second is aided by thoughtful worship; employment of tunes that make it easier for the minds to accept the words of the tunes; and a musical, soft, and eloquent phrase given by an intelligent person for the purpose of guidance. The third goal is aided by 'sensitive thought and pure love.' It is not the appetite but the character of the beloved that bestows this love.¹⁰⁴

The nine steps following the preparatory stages are these:

(1) Moments (*awqāt*). These are described as 'pleasurable stolen looks at the light of the Truth.' Moments involve an ecstasy for having the Truth and another over losing it.¹⁰⁵ The more one persists in one's spiritual exercise, the more these moments multiply.

(2) Deep and firm penetration into viewing the Truth, enabling the knower to dispense with spiritual exercise as a means for attaining such a vision. The more one persists in spiritual exercise, the more often one will have these moments. Also, it becomes possible for one to arrive at these moments without any exercise, for at a certain point exercise is no longer necessary for attaining these stolen looks or

moments. Rather, just looking at things in themselves reminds one of the holy world. The idea is that everything around us mirrors to some degree the world of sanctity. However, we have to reach a certain level of spiritual purity before we can see that. When we do, we will no longer need other means, such as spiritual exercise, to help bring about the conjunction between us and the world of sanctity.

(3) Breaking the cognitive barriers between the knower and the Truth by removing the veils that have covered his vision. The knower's unfamiliarity with the sight of the Truth causes him at first to lose his calmness. This state of disquietude is noticeable by others. However, the longer the veils stay lifted, the stronger the familiarity and, hence, the less shaken and disquieted the knower becomes. When this happens, he is made to hide his experience.¹⁰⁶ The reason seems to be the lack of any channel through which it can be conveyed to, and made understood by, anyone who has not had the same experience. This must be because language, the main and the clearest means of manifesting and communicating other types of experience, is inapplicable to this spiritual experience.¹⁰⁷

(4) Increase in conjunction, which enables the knower to become more familiar with the Truth rather than stealing quick glances at it. This familiarity stabilizes his knowledge and bestows tranquility on his soul.

(5) Delving further into knowledge, a step that gives the knower an appearance contrary to his experience. For example, he may appear to his companions as if he is with them, while in reality he is enjoying conjunction with the holy world and has no actual presence in this world.

(6) Attaining knowledge whenever the knower wishes. This is to be contrasted with the previous stages, in which the knower is given knowledge but only at times.

(7) Attaining conjunction with the Truth without even wishing to do so. In fact, it is said that at this stage, any time the knower encounters anything embodying the Truth, he immediately grasps the Truth regardless of whether or not he wishes to do so.¹⁰⁸ This is sure to happen even if the knower encounters that thing for some other purpose.

(8) Attaining conjunction with the Truth without any spiritual exercise, such that the knower's soul becomes a clear mirror reflecting the Truth. With this, the knower experiences the highest pleasure. However, at this stage, the knower still wavers and, therefore, is not yet totally

104. Ibid., p. 827.

105. Ibid., p. 828.

106. Ibid., p. 829.

107. Ibid., pp. 841-2.

108. Ibid., p. 832.

absorbed in the Truth. Rather, he continues to shift his sight between the Truth and himself.

(9) Attaining conjunction with the Truth without even being able to shift one's sight to oneself. This is total abandonment of oneself which leads to total absorption in the Truth. At this level, one can pay attention to oneself only insofar as the self observes the Truth, and not insofar, for example, as it experiences joy at having the Truth. Ibn Sīnā distinguishes between being aware of the Truth and being pleased at being aware of the Truth. It is the former state, according to him, that is involved in the final step of knowing. This is the only state that gives the knower actual arrival at the Truth and is the only thing capable of giving him salvation. All of the previous steps are inadequate for this purpose. For example, even the step that involves enjoyment of attaining the Truth distracts the knower from being totally absorbed in the Truth and, hence, from salvation.

The attainment of knowledge, therefore, requires that one cross two levels: purification and ornamentation. Purification is summed up in four steps. In the first step, the adept separates himself from the surrounding worldly things. This is referred to as 'separation.' In the second step, one sheds off attachments to such worldly things. This is done primarily through suppression or elimination of the inclination for, and attention to, such things. 'Detachment' is the term used to describe this step. In the third step, one concentrates totally on oneself, seeking for its completion knowledge and joy. This is called 'abandonment' (of the worldly things) for the purpose of the self. In the fourth step, abandonment is extended to cover even the self. Here attention is paid not to how the self can be completed with knowledge, but to the object of knowledge, that is, the Truth. This is the ultimate 'rejection,' that is, of everything other than the Truth.

Ornamentation, on the other hand, consists of taking on the attributes of the Truth or the One. At this level, no further upward movement in knowledge is possible, because this is the ultimate object of knowledge. However, it should be remembered that even though there is no further growth in knowledge, there is also no need for any further growth – even if growth were possible – because the Truth captures all there is to know. This is also to say that it captures all that exists as well, for the Truth and the One, or Being, are the same.

Salvation consists, not of attaining knowledge of the Truth, but of attaining the Truth Itself, the object of such knowledge. It is true that such knowledge leads to this object, but it is this object Itself that has the perfect infinite attributes in which we share once we arrive at this object. It is precisely this sharing that bestows on us salvation, owing to the qualities that this sharing gives to us. It should be remembered, therefore, that to seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge will never

give us salvation, but to find the Truth without even being aware of finding It will surely do so.

As there is motion and a number of steps in seeking the Truth, so also is there motion and a number of steps in the Truth. Even though the steps in the Truth are no fewer in number than those in seeking the Truth, yet the former are neither enumerated nor discussed in detail. This is because they cannot be the subject of discourse. The reason is that the faculty that captures them, that is, the theoretical intellect, is not a faculty of language but only a faculty of experience with certainty. Language is a worldly, or more specifically a human, aspect; therefore, what lies outside the worldly affairs, as does motion in the Truth, cannot be described by language. If this is so, then how can Ibn Sīnā even mention that there is such a motion, let alone describe it in general terms, as he does? At this point, he indicates a vague answer, namely, that the imagination, which is a faculty of language, receives weak semblances of the superworldly experiences of the theoretical intellect. With this in mind, some general vague statements can be made about this holy condition.¹⁰⁹ Nobody can fully and accurately describe this condition, as it is by nature indescribable. Therefore, full communication about it is impossible. The only way to grasp it is to experience it.¹¹⁰

He who experiences the Truth manifests certain qualities resulting from this experience, even though the experience itself and the holy qualities taken on remain in themselves hidden. For example, because he is pleased with the Truth in which everything to some extent shares, he is pleased with everything around him. That is why he smiles at the sight of any human being, for example, regardless of age or clarity of thought, considering all human beings equal inasmuch as they all share in the Truth. Similarly, he also considers them equal inasmuch as they are also all distracted from the Truth by the falsehood of worldly affairs. This distraction renders them worthy of mercy. Therefore, in either case, he treats them with equal friendliness. In the former case, he is pleased with all for their sharing in the Truth. In the latter case, he feels sorry for all due to their preoccupation with falsehood.

When the knower turns his attention to the Truth yet encounters an obstacle to his arriving at the Truth, whether this obstacle is 'from himself or from the movement of his innermost thought,' he experiences a state in which he is disturbed by anything external, even if that thing is the mildest sound.¹¹¹ On the other hand, when he arrives at the

109. This role of the imagination will later be elaborated in the discussion of the Tenth Class.

110. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, p. 842.

111. *Ibid.*, p. 844.

Truth, he loses this state; there, nothing can disturb him. This is due to one of two reasons: (1) his inability to pay attention to anything but the Truth since he is totally absorbed in and overwhelmed by It, or (2) his ability to pay attention to both the Truth and to things other than the Truth without being disturbed or distracted by the latter since he is well grounded in the former. Furthermore, when he is in the Truth, he is the most joyful of all creatures, something that makes him difficult to disturb.¹¹²

Owing to his preoccupation with the Truth, the knower is uninterested in studying others or collecting information about them. Again, this is either because his concern with the Truth leaves no room for concern with other things or because his grasp of the Truth already gives knowledge of other things. The latter is so for one of two reasons: (1) As mentioned, everything shares in the Truth, and as such, to know the Truth is to some extent to know everything else. (2) The Truth or God knows everything; therefore, for the knower to know the Truth is, at the same time, to know everything else since his knowing the Truth bestows on him the same attributes of the Truth. Furthermore, not even bad actions provoke his anger, for his knowledge of the hidden divine reasons for why things happen the way they happen provokes his sympathy and mercy even for the worst things. He calls for good actions with kind advice, never with violent blaming. His enthusiasm for defending good actions may drive him to magnify the importance of such actions by way of attempting to convince those who do not adhere to such actions of the goodness of such actions.

Other qualities of the knower are these: courage, generosity, forgiveness, and forgetfulness. The knower is courageous because not even death can cause fear in him. After all, he must welcome death, for it sets him free from the body and, therefore, from any possible distraction from the Truth. At this point, the following question is in order: If this is the case, then why is it that the knower does not pursue suicide in order to detach himself from his body as quickly as possible? The answer is that the knower, like Socrates, Plato, and Plotinus, has to wait for God's decree to determine the time of death.¹¹³

The knower is generous because his love is directed only toward the Truth. This means that he can give away everything else, including money, with no expectation of anything in return. He is also forgiving of any bad deeds against him because no such deeds can ever hurt him. This is because his soul, which is him – his body being just a bundle of external attachments – is superior to evil things, and the superior cannot be harmed by the inferior. This is a Platonic view argued for

by Socrates. Furthermore, the preoccupation of his memory with the Truth makes him unable to remember even the grudges of others, let alone their bad actions. This reminds us of Rābī'a al-'Adawiyya's claim that her heart is so full of love for God that it has no room for hatred of the devil.¹¹⁴

One knower's reactions to a thing may be different from the reactions of other knowers. Furthermore, owing to the fact that knowers experience different motivating considerations, his own reaction to a thing may vary from time to time. This provokes in the knowers different thoughts that, in turn, urge them to react differently from each other and differently from themselves at different times. For example, a knower, who is concerned about attributing less value to nondivine things than they have, may go so far as to prefer and seek a thing over what is superior to it under the same genus. Ibn Sīnā illustrates this point with the following possibility: A knower might prefer a rough life and a bad odor to a luxurious life and a good odor respectively. If, on the other hand, the knower looks for evidence of the Truth in the nondivine things, then his preference may be the opposite. His love will be directed only toward the best members of a genus, as his hatred will be directed only toward its worst members.

Once the knower reaches the Truth and transcends this world, he may become unaware of everything in this world, including the means that had led him to the Truth. For this reason, he may at times behave in a way unacceptable to society and religion. For example, while in this condition, he may walk in the streets in the nude.¹¹⁵ However, he does not become a sinner if he acts contrary to the religious duties that dictate, for example, that certain parts of the body must be covered in public. Ibn Sīnā agrees with the Qur'anic view that 'God does not impose on a soul any religious duties that are not in accordance with the capacity of that soul.'¹¹⁶ The insane and the child cannot, for instance, bear the same religious responsibilities that the sane and the adult do. From Ibn Sīnā's point of view, religious duties are imposed only on two main types of people: (1) those who comprehend the religious duties, and only when they comprehend them, that is, neither before nor after; and (2) those who do not comprehend the religious duties but can do so.¹¹⁷ The latter are those who become sinners for not abiding by the religious duties. The knower, who reaches the Truth and transcends this world, neither understands the religious duties nor is capable of doing so.

114. See Majid Fakhri, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 236.

115. The example is mine.

116. *Qur'ān*, II, 233 and 286.

117. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 851.

112. *Ibid.*, pp. 844–5.

113. See, for example, *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, in *Rasā'il*, p. 7.

The Ninth Class closes with the idea that not every human being can reach the Truth. Effort alone is not sufficient for doing so. One must also have a special soul with a special capacity for reaching the Truth. Why is it then that some have this capacity and others do not? The answer is given in the last sentence of this class, namely, that we are so created, that is, some with this capacity and some without it. But one may want to ask the further question: Why are we so created? However, to ask this question is to try to delve into God's secrets of destiny, which are not for us to decipher.

The Distinguishing Signs of Knowledge

The discussion in the Tenth Class centers on the unusual external signs of knowledge and the reasons behind them. One of these signs is said to be the ability of the knower to refrain from eating for a very long time.¹¹⁸ Another sign is the knower's ability to perform acts that others are unable to perform.¹¹⁹ A further sign is the knower's ability to have access to the invisible world.¹²⁰ Other signs are also discussed.¹²¹

(1) Knowledge, like fear, is a state of the soul that has its effects on the body, among which is the loss of appetite for food. Ibn Sīnā mentions, but does not elaborate, the comparison between knowledge and fear in terms of their effect on the appetite for food. However, he discusses in detail the comparison between knowledge and bodily sickness with regard to the same point. The reason could be that knowledge and fear both belong to the soul and that, therefore, at least with regard to the above-mentioned point, whatever is true of the former is also true of the latter. The case of knowledge and bodily sickness is different. The former belongs to the soul, but the latter belongs to the body. Therefore, the similarities and differences with regard to their effect on the body, especially on the appetite, need to be detailed. In any case, it is said that, like bodily sickness when accompanied by fever, knowledge leads to a loss of appetite, but the degree of this loss in the latter case is even greater than that in the former.

Ibn Sīnā's reasoning is that in both bodily sickness and knowledge, the vegetative power is distracted from its natural object, food. In the former case this is so because the sickness works in opposition to the vegetative power, therefore, weakening it. In the case of knowl-

edge the loss of appetite happens, not because the vegetative power is weakened, but because this power, like other bodily powers, becomes inattentive to its object in spite of its strength, since its attention is drawn somewhere else. This happens when the theoretical intellect or tranquil soul is absorbed in the divine realm, for such absorption requires the rest and orderliness of the bodily powers. If this state of bodily rest is not achieved, then this soul will have to attend to managing the activities of the body and, therefore, will not be able to pay the required attention to the divine realm. Thus, the soul tames and inactivates the bodily powers as much as possible before it can attain knowledge. Therefore, with knowledge hardly any food is needed since the bodily powers are inoperative.

However, it should be pointed out that in the case of sickness that is accompanied by fever, there is some need for food to replenish the moistness that has been depleted by the fever and to regain the strength of the bodily powers. Therefore, it is clear that in the case of such sickness, while the weakness of the bodily powers enhances the loss of appetite, as mentioned earlier, it also enhances the need for food to eliminate this weakness. Thus, if you hear that a knower spends a long time with no food or with very little food, you must believe it. It is a natural principle that no food is needed when: (1) moistness and the other bodily qualities are in equilibrium, (2) the bodily powers are strong, and (3) the bodily powers are at rest. In the case of the knower, all these conditions obtain.

(2) Another characteristic of the knower is the ability to perform certain acts that other human beings cannot perform. Ibn Sīnā again attributes this to a natural principle. If the human states are moderate, it is also natural for the human force behind action to be moderate. If, on the other hand, these states are either distressed or excited, it is natural for such human force to be either weaker or stronger respectively. For example, when fear or grief touches one's soul, one becomes unable to perform one-tenth of the actions one is able to perform when one enjoys moderate states. Anger, rivalry, moderate intoxication, and moving joy produce the opposite result. When one experiences any of these, one's force to act is made stronger than when one experiences moderate states. Also, the stronger any of the last four states mentioned, the stronger one's force. If this is so, it should, therefore, be neither impossible nor even surprising for the knower to experience a state producing high excitement similar to that of, for instance, moving joy. But the excitement in the case of the knower must be even more intense than that in the case of moving joy. The reason is that the object of the excitement in the former case is God, the highest object in existence, the experience of which produces the highest excitement and joy.

118. Ibid. (Chaps 1-4), pp. 853-7.

119. Ibid. (Chaps 5-6), pp. 858-60.

120. Ibid. (Chaps 7-24), pp. 861-91.

121. Ibid. (Chaps 25-29), pp. 892-900.

That is why this most intense state of excitement or joy results in the strongest force possible, which enables the knower to perform acts that other human beings cannot perform.

(3) A nobler and, therefore, a more important characteristic of a knower is the ability to be in touch with the hidden world. The hidden world is the world of things ordinarily not seen or understood by humans and includes future events on earth. Due to its importance, Ibn Sīnā devotes much more room to the discussion of this sign than to the discussion of any other sign. He tells us that this state is not impossible; after all, both experience and reasoning show that it can occur in the state of sleep. If this is possible in one human state, it should also be possible in other human states, such as wakefulness.¹²² But while this is possible during wakefulness, preoccupation with the sensible objects, which occurs primarily when a person is awake, prevents this from happening. Therefore, some people conclude from this that its occurrence during wakefulness is impossible. However, that is not true, for preoccupation with the sensible objects is something that can be eliminated.

Now, what is Ibn Sīnā's evidence that experience and reasoning agree that in sleep we can attain some vision of the hidden world? To begin with, he states that one's own personal experience and the reports of others about their experiences reveal that vision of the hidden things is possible in sleep. These personal experiences and reports are highly persuasive. That is why every human being who receives these experiences (and, according to Ibn Sīnā, every human being does) admits their occurrence if certain conditions obtain. These conditions are an uncorrupt temperament, an operative imagination, and an operative memory. Therefore, those who fall short of making this admission have a corrupt temperament, an inoperative imagination, an inoperative memory or, of course, a combination of these. The uncorrupt temperament and the operative imagination are necessary for the occurrence of this experience, as we will soon see. The operative memory is necessary for retaining the experience, whether personally felt or learned about from the reports of others. That is why a disorder in any of these three factors stands in the way of knowing and, therefore, of admitting this state of having vision of the hidden world. The same conclusion that experience confirms is revealed by reason through demonstrating two points: (1) The celestial rational beings have knowledge of particulars prior to the occurrence of these particulars. (2) Under certain conditions, it is possible for our rational souls to receive these beings'

122. Ibid., p. 863.

knowledge and, therefore, knowledge of particulars prior to their occurrence. Let us now elaborate these two points.

(1) Ibn Sīnā states in *al-Ishārāt wa-tanbīhāt* that the celestial rational beings have knowledge of particulars, and that they do so in a certain manner. However, he does not give any reason for this knowledge and its manner. Rather, he only reminds us that this matter has been explicated earlier.¹²³ In brief, the general idea is this: To know the cause is to know the effect. The celestial rational beings participate in being causes of particulars. Also, they know themselves. Therefore, they know they are such causes. Hence, they also know their effects, the particulars. In order to understand in what manner they do so, the following must first be made clear.

The celestial rational beings are intellects and souls that belong to the celestial bodies. The former are separate from these bodies and act as their primary and indirect principles of motion. They are simply final causes of these bodies. They move these bodies by being their models of perfection. The latter, on the other hand, while not imprinted in these bodies, nevertheless have a relation to them similar to the relation between our souls and our bodies, and act as their secondary and direct principles of their motion. They move these bodies by being their efficient causes. This is made possible by the direct relation they have to these bodies. In turn, the motion of these bodies, together with the intellect of the moon, the last celestial intellect, cause the particulars on earth.¹²⁴ In other words, the celestial intellects and souls participate in causing the particulars on earth through the intermediary of the celestial bodies and the intellect of the moon.

It follows from the above that these intellects and souls must also know the particulars since, as mentioned, they know themselves, which means they know themselves as causes of the particulars. But to know the cause is to know the effect. However, since these intellects have no relationship to their bodies or to any other matter,¹²⁵ their knowledge cannot be particular,¹²⁶ for that would require direct con-

123. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, pp. 863-6.

124. For the present discussion, it is unnecessary to detail the manner according to which this happens.

125. *Ilāhiyyāt, II*, pp. 387 and 393.

126. Particular knowledge is the temporal particular perception asserting that a certain eclipse, for example, occurred in the past, is occurring now, or will occur in the future. This particular perception occurs with the occurrence of the perceived object and is eliminated with its elimination (*Ishārāt, Part Three*, pp. 718-19). In other words, this perception changes with the change of its object. Therefore, it causes change in the knower. That is why the celestial intellects and God that are unchangeable by nature - for they are separate from matter, the source of change - cannot experience particular knowledge.

tact with matter. But if their knowledge is not particular, it must be universal.¹²⁷

In contrast, by virtue of their relation to their bodies, the celestial souls are able to have particular knowledge of particular things. These souls are also given the privilege of having universal knowledge as well. This is necessitated by their being rational, which in essence means pure of matter. Ibn Sīnā puts it thus:

You gather from what we have pointed out that particular things are imprinted in the intelligible world in a universal manner and are imprinted in the psychic world in a particular manner, perceptive of time, or are imprinted in the psychic world in both manners simultaneously.¹²⁸

Aṭ-Ṭūsī points out that Ibn Sīnā mentions that the view of the Peripatetics is that the universal intelligibles and particulars cannot be represented in the same thing. That is why, according to this view, the former are represented in the celestial intellects and the latter in the celestial souls. The two cannot be represented together in one of these celestial beings. This Peripatetic view is referred to in the first part of the passage just quoted: 'particular things are imprinted in the intelligible world in a universal manner and are imprinted in the psychic world in a particular manner, perceptive of time.' Aṭ-Ṭūsī observes that, while Ibn Sīnā cites the Peripatetic view in this regard, he also presents his own view, which differs from that of the Peripatetics. Ibn Sīnā's view allows for particular things to be represented in the same thing both in a universal manner and in a particular manner. This view is referred to in the last part of the last passage: 'or are imprinted in the psychic world in both manners simultaneously.'¹²⁹

(2) We now come to the second point, namely, that reason shows our souls as capable of receiving from the intelligible world knowledge of particulars prior to the occurrence of these particulars. There are two conditions under which this can happen. First, the human soul must have the proper preparation for receiving this knowledge and, second,

127. Universal knowledge is the perception of a thing apart from time. Universal knowledge, even of particular things, is always the same. For example, this is the knowledge that 'between the moon's being in such and such a place and its being in another, there is a specific eclipse at a determined moment of the time of its being at the beginning of one of the two states. The knower's knowledge of this is a fixed matter before the occurrence of the eclipse, with it, and after it' (*Ishārāt, Part Three*, pp. 719–20). In other words, universal knowledge grasps the conditions under which a thing can occur, without grasping when this thing occurs. Because the universal conditions are always the same, knowing them will not cause any change of the knower. That is why God and the celestial intellects are said to know in this manner.

128. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, pp. 865–6.

129. 'Commentary,' p. 866. It seems that Aṭ-Ṭūsī bases his interpretation on the passage in *Ishārāt, Part Three*, pp. 609–11.

any obstacle to the attainment of this knowledge must be removed. Nothing is said about the first point in the fourth part of *al-Ishārāt*. But in the third part of the same work, Ibn Sīnā states:

The soul's multiple managements of the sensible images and the intelligible archetypes that are in the representational power and in memory respectively, endow the soul with the preparedness for accepting from the separate substance the abstraction of these images and archetypes, due to a certain analogy between them and the soul. This the soul does by employing the power of estimation and that of cognition. Observation of, and reflection on, this situation verifies that this is so. Such managements specify the complete preparedness for the forms one by one.¹³⁰

The preparation of the soul for receiving knowledge of particulars, that is, the forms of particulars, from the intelligible world requires that the soul already has some experience with managing the sensible forms found in the representational faculty and memory. Contrary to the notion of the soul's preparation, the issue of the removal of obstacles is taken up in the fourth part of *al-Ishārāt* and is discussed in detail.

According to Ibn Sīnā, the soul has various powers with different functions, some of which are in opposition to others. That is why when some of these powers are at work, they either dominate or are dominated by those powers with which they are in opposition. Which power dominates and which one is dominated depends on the relative strength and weakness of these powers respectively. A further consequence of the conflict among the powers of the soul is that the stronger power succeeds not only in dominating its opponent but also in attracting the attention of the soul to itself. Since the soul's attention cannot be divided,¹³¹ it will, therefore, be distracted from the dominated opponent.

Take, for example, the powers of anger and appetite and those of the external and internal senses. For instance, if anger is strong, the appetite, the opposing power, is weakened and dominated by anger. The stronger the former the weaker the latter and conversely. Furthermore, the soul turns its attention to the stronger side, be it anger or the appetite. Hence, if anger dominates the appetite, the soul becomes preoccupied with anger and inattentive to the appetite.

The more important example for the present discussion is that of the powers of the external and internal senses. If the external senses are strong, the internal senses are weakened and pulled to the side of the external senses. This turns the attention of the intellect to the external senses – the intellect being a part of the rational soul, which, in turn, is a part of the human soul. This comes about due to the fact that when the internal senses are pulled to the external senses, they

130. *Ishārāt, Part Three*, pp. 303–4.

131. Except under a certain condition that will be discussed later.

also pull along with them anything over which they have control. Control is not the proper domain of superior powers. Even inferior powers can have control over superior ones just by being, for example, instruments for fulfilling the ends of the superior powers. This is exactly the kind of control mentioned here.

Before going any further, a statement about the nature of the imaginative power and its relation to the intellect is in order. The imaginative power is one of the five internal senses and is called 'imaginative' only when employed by the estimation. However, it is called 'cognitive' when employed by the intellect¹³² as a tool for the process of thinking, a process that is the proper function of the intellect. This power drags the attention of the intellect along with it to the side of the external senses when it itself is dragged in that direction. This is to say that here the tool has power over the direction of that which uses it as a tool. Interestingly enough, under these conditions, the intellect is no longer able to engage in the process of thinking, for this would require that the intellect turn its attention inward to using thought as its tool. But first, the intellect cannot turn inward since its attention is already taken by the external senses. Second, even if it could, it would not be able to control and use its instrument since the imaginative power, which has already been noted as the seat of this instrument, has also turned its attention outward. In other words, at this point the intellect has no thought to think, for that which can be made into thought is not available. What further weakens the intellect's ability to have control over the imaginative power and, therefore, to perform its proper function of thinking is that the strength of the external senses also pulls the intellect's attention in their direction, thereby, preventing the intellect from performing its proper acts.

In summary, the strength of the external senses causes two effects, each of which results in the inability of the intellect to think. The first effect is the dominance of the external senses over the internal ones. This drives the internal senses to turn outward their attention and the attention of anything – including the intellect – over which they have power by way of being instruments for it. The second effect is the outward attraction of the intellect by another factor, the external senses themselves. It is obvious, therefore, that both effects stand in the way of the intellect's ability to think, which, as we will see, is necessary for the knowledge of particulars under consideration.

The above reasoning leads to the simple conclusion that in order for the intellect to think it must be able to have control over the internal senses. This means that the external senses must be weak. Of course, one way of weakening the external senses is to strengthen the internal

ones. Once the latter are strong, they can perform their acts properly, while the former can hardly act. Now it is very well to say that when the external senses are weak the inner ones are strong, and vice versa. But the question remains as to what is the cause of this weakness or of this strength. Ibn Sīnā makes no effort to provide us with an answer.

Now let us assume that the soul has reached its proper level of preparation for receiving knowledge of particulars, and that further there is no longer any obstacle to its receiving this knowledge. The question remains as to where and how this knowledge is received. Ibn Sīnā begins to answer this question by pointing out that the common sense, the first internal sense mentioned earlier,¹³³ is the tablet on which the forms of sensible or particular objects are engraved. When the forms of particular things are well established in the common sense, they become visible to the soul. Even if the sensible object whose form is imprinted on the common sense is removed, its form may remain in the common sense and, therefore, remain visible as a reality and not as an imagined thing. It must be remembered, though, that the common sense can receive its representations of forms either from the outside or from the inside. The forms received from the outside come through the channel of the external senses and originate in sensible objects. The forms received from the inside come through the channel of the internal senses and originate in nonsensible objects. The forms received from the outside can take hold of the common sense and, hence, become visible whether their objects are just beginning to act on the common sense, or have acted on it and are still present, or have acted on it and are now removed.¹³⁴ Observation provides evidence for this. The reader is called upon to remember this evidence as presented earlier, where it was stated:

Do you not see the water drop falling as a straight line, and the point that circles with rapidity as a circular line? All of this is by way of observation and not by way of imagination or memory. You know that in vision, only the form of that which faces one is represented. That which falls or circles and which faces one is something like a point, not a line. There remains, therefore, in some of your powers the form of that which was first represented in vision. The present visual form is then conveyed to these powers. Therefore, you have a power like the power that observes corresponding to vision and to which vision leads. It is in this power that the sensibles collect and are then grasped by it.¹³⁵

133. See p. 9 above.

134. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, pp. 870–1.

135. *Ishārāt, Part Two*, pp. 374–6.

132. *Ishārāt, Part Two*, p. 382.

The forms coming from the inside can also establish themselves in the common sense and, hence, acquire visibility. But what evidence is there of the presence, persistence, and visibility of such forms? Such evidence, according to Ibn Sīnā, can be found in the fact that ill and bilious people may witness with clarity the presence of a sensible form that has no relation to anything in the external world. No argument is offered here to show that the presence of these forms is real, and that these forms have no relation to the external world. But Ibn Sīnā's thinking must be along the following lines: The fact that the presence of these forms is witnessed with clarity attests to the reality of this presence. The idea here is that whatever is observable is real. Also, the fact that nobody else can witness these forms indicates that they have no relation to external objects. He concludes from the above that the representation of these forms must, therefore, be caused by something internal, or by something affecting something internal.¹³⁶ The former is the region of the imagination and estimation; the latter, as we will soon see, is the soul. The common sense receives sensible forms from the outside and transmits them to its storage area, the representational faculty, where they are picked up by the imagination. The imagination, in turn, transmits back to the common sense the forms it has picked up from the representational faculty and from memory – memory being the storage area of the estimative faculty, which, like the common sense, derives representations of sensible forms.¹³⁷ The common sense and the imagination, therefore, are like two mirrors facing each other and reflecting the same thing.

The representation of the sensible forms of the imagination in the common sense can be hampered by two things, the first being the preoccupation of the common sense with the external world. Such preoccupation imposes forms of external objects on the common sense, leaving no room in this power for any imprints coming from the inside. It seems that, like the soul itself, the soul's powers – such as the common sense – cannot pay attention to more than one thing at a time. Once the common sense is preoccupied with the outside, it becomes unreceptive to anything else, for it is unable to turn its attention to anything else. The second obstacle is the preoccupation of the imagination with something internal, be that the intellect, as in the case of human beings, or the estimative power, as in the case of animals. This happens when the intellect or the estimative power distracts the imagination with their objects, thus controlling it and managing it for their own purposes. Hence, they restrain its freedom and weaken its

136. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, pp. 871–2.

137. The difference is that forms in the common sense are derived from the outside, while forms in the estimative faculty are derived from the inside as instincts.

power of action. This paralyzes the imagination's ability to transmit its forms to the common sense, as it does when it is free and strong.

In other words, what prevents the imagination from imprinting its forms on the common sense is the unreceptivity of that which must receive these forms and the inability of the agent to act. Both conditions are necessary for the definite prevention of the formation of imaginative forms in the common sense. For,

When one of the two preoccupations is at rest, the other persists but may be incapable of having control. The imagination then will have power over the common sense. Hence, the forms appear in the common sense as observed sensibles.¹³⁸

If you are facing a mirror and the mirror is clear, your image will be reflected on the mirror regardless of what you are doing. Likewise, the imagination faces the common sense which, if clear, reflects the images of the imagination whether or not the imagination can pay any attention to, or make any effort toward, that purpose. Also, if you are in control of your actions, you can situate yourself in a way that will give you a strong and visible image, something that would ensure the impression of this image on the mirror, even if the mirror is unclear. Similarly, if the imagination is strong and free, it will have the power to impress its images on the common sense, even if the latter is crowded with other forms.

Now the question is: Can these preoccupations be eliminated, and if so, how? Ibn Sīnā maintains that they can and that sleep is one state in which they can be eliminated. It is obvious that in sleep the external senses responsible for preoccupying the common sense during wakefulness are inoperative. In sleep, for example, we do not experience the tactile, auditory, or visual sensations from a concrete, external flower. Also, in sleep, the other preoccupying factor (the soul with its rational and estimative parts) is distracted from its proper function which, as mentioned, is the consideration of certain objects, a consideration that weakens the imagination. Nature dictates that in sleep the soul comes to the aid of the body, which needs to assimilate and manage nourishment as well as rest from any other motion – such as walking – that could cause further fatigue. If the soul were to engage in such activities, it could not pay attention to its proper function. As mentioned, the soul cannot have divided attention. Besides, if the soul pays attention to its proper function, the powers of the body will be dragged behind it and will, therefore, abandon their own function.

That is why if the body is to be managed properly, and nature dictates that it must, then the following conditions must obtain: first,

138. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, p. 874.

the soul must come to its aid and, second, the soul must not distract the bodily powers by employing them in its service. It can be gathered from what has been said so far that by the first, the second is also accomplished, for the soul cannot be pulled in two different directions at the same time. Therefore, when the soul turns its attention to the body, it turns its attention away from itself and, thus, needs no help in attaining its purposes. In sleep, the body is in a state similar to being sick. It needs to take care of its own affairs and rest from the fatigue it experiences in the state of wakefulness, or else it will not be able to rise again and continue the daily activities. Similarly, if the main bodily organs are overcome by a disease, the soul will immediately come to the aid of the body, thereby abandoning its proper acts. Again, this weakens the hold of the soul on the imagination. With this, one of the preoccupying factors would be missing. But, as mentioned, even if one of the two preoccupying factors is missing, the imagined forms may still be represented in the common sense. In other words, even if one is awake and one's external senses are preoccupying the common sense, disease could still make it possible for the imagined forms to be represented in the common sense.

As stated earlier, the various powers of the soul that have conflicting functions and ends, such as the powers of anger and appetite and those of the external and internal senses, seek to lure the soul to their side. But the stronger the soul is in its substance, the more it is independent of these luring powers. Not only does this strength set the soul free from the control of these powers, but it also gives the soul the power to keep them under its control and, hence, to keep them in balance for the good of the whole individual. Of course, if the soul is weak, the consequence is reversed. Furthermore, if the soul is well exercised, it can avoid what distances it from exercise and approach what brings it closer.

If the soul is not preoccupied with sense representations, it will likely have sudden escapes to the divine realm from the shackles of the imagination. When this happens, certain invisible things are imprinted on the soul; that is, the soul receives knowledge of certain hidden things. But since the part of the soul that receives this knowledge (the rational soul) is by nature immaterial, it cannot grasp anything except in a universal manner. So far, therefore, this knowledge of hidden things is universal. However, these universal imprints of invisible things can flow to the imagination, as will soon be shown. Because the imagination belongs to the natural and, hence, the material world, it cannot grasp any knowledge except in a particular manner. Thus, the imagination grasps this knowledge in this manner and, in turn, reflects it in the same manner on the common sense. Let us now elaborate the above.

The soul is set free from preoccupation with sense representations

when at least one of the two manufacturers of such representations, the external senses and the imagination, is at rest. The external senses are at rest in the state of sleep. The imagination is at rest either in the state of certain diseases that also preoccupy the external senses or in the state of exhaustion owing to excess in the movement of thought. The imagination's latter type of rest results from the fact that the excess in the movement of thought causes the disintegration of the instrument of the imagination, namely, the spirit that is lodged in the first part of the middle region of the brain.¹³⁹ The imagination is thus immediately put to rest, that is, from preoccupation with sense representations so that it can recover its energy to resume its regular activities. The imagination's weakness and need for rest, however, does not last. But, as mentioned, while it lasts, the soul takes the opportunity to escape with ease to the divine realm, where it collects universal knowledge about hidden things. While this is happening, the imagination is reinforcing its energy. As soon as the imagination is in full force, it pulls the soul down to our world once again.

More importantly, the imagination can now receive the knowledge of hidden things from the soul by means of either (1) primarily the imagination, or (2) primarily the soul. (1) After the imagination rests and recovers its energy, it becomes sensitive and alert to any foreign stimulus neighboring it. The imprint of any invisible thing in the soul acts as such a stimulus. Thus, the rested imagination with the aid of foreign stimuli from the soul causes the formation of the psychic imprints in the imagination – but, of course, in the only manner possible for the imagination to grasp these imprints, that is, in a particular manner. (2) By nature, the rational soul uses the imagination as an instrument on the occasion of this soul's conjunction with the divine realm. Ibn Sīnā does not tell us how the rational soul uses the imagination in this case. However, his idea seems to be this. The rational soul, whose objects are immaterial and universal, cannot transmit its objects to the common sense, the region where they become visible and that accepts only material and particular objects. The rational soul, therefore, employs the imagination to dress these objects with a material and particular cloak that makes possible the transmission of these objects to the common sense. If the imagination receives the imprints of the invisible things when it is free from preoccupation, then these imprints are imprinted in turn on the common sense.

It must be mentioned that, according to Ibn Sīnā, while the elimination of, or decrease in, sense preoccupation facilitates the soul's escape to the divine realm, it is not necessary for this purpose. If the soul has a strong substance that enables it to attend to the various sides that

139. *Ishārāt*, Part Two, p. 382.

pull in different directions, it is possible for it to make such an escape even when sense preoccupation is at its highest, as in the waking state.¹⁴⁰ In other words, if the soul is strong, it can steal some glimpses of the world beyond while, at the same time, also attending to the sense representations of the imagination and the external senses, both of which call for its attention and seek to drag it downward. This may happen not only in the waking state, that is, when the external senses are active and deposit sense representations in the common sense, but also in some other states in which the imagination is likewise active and need not rest, as in the state of health and that of nonexcessive movement of thought. As already mentioned, the imagination is forced to stop its activities only in the case of disease or in the case of much movement of thought. But in the states of health and nonexcessive movement of thought, the imagination continues its preoccupation with sense representations. In short, it is possible for a strong soul to steal a glimpse of the divine realm even when nothing weakens or eliminates the external senses and the imagination, whose activities prevent a weak soul from reaching beyond by trampling it with their sense preoccupations.

If the soul is strong, then the divine traces that descend to it can either reach the memory and make no further movement or can move on through the imagination to the common sense. If these traces take the latter path, then they shine clearly in the imagination, which drags the common sense by force to its side and imprints these traces on it with clarity.¹⁴¹ This clear presence of the divine traces in the common sense is referred to as 'the imaginative prophecy'¹⁴² in order to differentiate it from other types of prophecy. This prophetic vision is enhanced by the fact that the rational soul unveils its objects to the internal powers. It must be mentioned that certain diseases are also said to have the capacity to cause the imagination to make up such imprints and then convey them to the common sense as it would when it receives them from the soul.¹⁴³ However, the imprints that are received from the soul are better than those made up by the imagination due to diseases, for the former are reflections of certain aspects of the divine world, whereas the latter are mere fabrications. The common sense representations whose source is the soul can take different forms, such as the form of a visible thing or that of a voice. Again, each of these forms can be of different kinds. For example, the former can either represent the invisible thing as it is or it can be an image of it. In either case, the object of the representation can also be different,

140. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, p. 880. Compare this with *An-Nafs*, p. 173.

141. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, pp. 881-2.

142. *An-Nafs*, p. 173.

143. *Ishārāt, Part Four*, p. 882.

ranging from the lowest angels to God. The latter can be expressed in various styles of discourse, such as verse.¹⁴⁴

The imagination is naturally inclined to reproduce whatever is in its vicinity, be that a mental or a physical disposition. Furthermore, its nature also dictates that it not stand still. So, for example, after it reproduces a neighboring thing, it quickly moves either to the like or to the opposite of that thing.¹⁴⁵ However, this constant and rapid flux in the content of the imagination is not all undesirable. For instance, it can make the unknown known by helping thought move from something known to something unknown, as in analogy. Still, rest and stability are necessary for the imagination if it is to attain knowledge of stable things. Now, can the imagination ever rest and achieve stability? Yes, it can in the following cases: (1) when the soul strongly opposes such movement of the imagination, or (2) when the objects represented in the soul are represented in the imagination with intense clarity. The reason for the effectiveness of the former case is clear. The reason for the effectiveness of the latter case is that clarity makes these objects visible to the imagination and reflects them there with an intense clarity that fixes them in place and prevents their movement in any direction.

The divine traces that can be revealed to the soul in sleep or wakefulness are divided into three types.

(1) Those that are weak and, therefore, have no power to affect the imagination or memory. Consequently, they leave no trace in these two faculties.

(2) Those that are moderately strong and have the power to have some effect on the imagination and memory. The moderate strength of these traces enables them to cause some movement in the imagination. However, because these traces are not very strong, they fall short of establishing themselves in the imagination with clarity and, hence, fall short of stability, as clarity is a necessary condition for stability. Thus, these traces lie beyond the capture and retention of memory that can only capture and retain from this process the movements of the imagination and the semblance of these traces.

(3) Those that are very strong and are received by a firm and stable soul, and so can be imprinted in the imagination with intense clarity. This enables the memory to grasp these traces with clarity and vividness free from the influence of any movement.

The above three types of representations are not limited to divine traces. The thoughts we entertain during wakefulness can also be subsumed under these three types. Our thoughts in this state can, therefore,

144. *Ibid.*, pp. 882, 890.

145. *Ibid.*, p. 882.

be viewed as weak, moderately strong, or very strong. The first has no stability and, thus, does not allow the memory to focus on it and to retain it. Therefore, there is no memory of it and no way of returning to it. The second is also unstable, but to a lesser degree. That is why, even though it is forgotten, it is possible to return to it through analysis and interpretation. The third, being very strong, is clear and stable and, thus, endures in memory.

The divine traces that are maintained in memory with clarity and stability, whether in sleep or in wakefulness, are either inspirations, pure revelations, or dreams. Because of their clarity, these traces need no interpretation or expression – regardless which of the above forms they take. If, on the other hand, the memory maintains not these traces themselves, but only those things that are their like, then there is need for interpretation or expression. Revelation, for example, would need interpretation and dreams would need expression. However, the type of interpretation or expression varies from one individual to another, from one time to another, and from one custom to another.¹⁴⁶

Some physical acts can help us receive invisible things by perplexing the external senses and the imagination, thereby quieting them.¹⁴⁷ The theoretical intellect, the only power capable of receiving invisible things, is thus enabled to turn its face upward, for it is now free from preoccupation with the above-mentioned powers that often drag it down by their demands on it. Such physical acts are exemplified by very fast running that can almost make one faint. Reflections on an agitated transparent thing that shudders the vision by its agitation or dazzles it by its transparency are also among such acts. A similar result is produced by gazing at a black stain, or a shiny or wavy thing. The unalert and the youngsters are more affected by such physical acts than are the alert and normal adults.¹⁴⁸ This is because the natures of the former are more easily astonished and confused than the natures of the latter.¹⁴⁹ The greater the susceptibility of one's nature to astonishment and confusion and the greater the ability of the object to astonish and confuse, the greater the astonishment and confusion. For example, an insane person listening to a long, mixed discourse will be more astonished and confused than will a sane one listening to a short, clear discourse or even to the same long, mixed discourse.

The reader may now raise a very interesting issue, namely, whether or not it is better to be insane than sane, unalert than alert, or a youngster than a normal adult. According to the above discussion, the

more easily confused and perplexed one's senses and imagination, the better. The reason is that confusion and perplexity of the senses and the imagination more easily allow the reception of invisible or divine knowledge. The insane, the unalert, the youngsters, and the like are said to be more easily confused and perplexed than those who are of different natures. It would seem to follow that the insane, the unalert, and so forth attain conjunction with the divine world more easily than others. However, one should not forget that this is so only if all other things are equal. But all other things are not equal. For example, the theoretical intellects of such individuals are not in themselves as strong and prepared to receive knowledge of divine things and, hence, conjunction with the divine world as are the theoretical intellects of others. This is to say that having one's senses and imagination confused does facilitate conjunction with the divine world but does not insure it.

The final point made regarding knowledge of invisible things is that in themselves invisible things can be experienced but not demonstrated. The reason for their being undemonstrable is their being beyond the capture of our language – language being necessary for demonstration. As stated earlier, invisible things belong to the divine world, whereas our language belongs to this world. Of course, as mentioned, invisible things can be reflected in the imagination and the common sense – these two powers being a part of this world. But in these powers, invisible things do not appear as they are in themselves; rather they are given some material attachment or cover, such as a certain physical form or a voice. This is the only way they can be grasped by animal powers. The theoretical intellect may grasp them in themselves, but the theoretical intellect and its objects are by nature immaterial and, therefore, beyond language or anything else of this world. This is not to say that nothing can be said about invisible things but only that nothing can be said about them in themselves. Any discourse about them is an approximation of the truth since it is about their appearance or reflection. Therefore, discourse about them can offer us opinion but not certitude. But while we cannot describe invisible things with accuracy, we can experience them, and thus, be certain about their existence and nature. In other words, it is possible to know the invisible world with certainty through the means of experience. Still, it is not possible to convey this knowledge to others. If so, what are we to make of Ibn Sīnā's long discourse on the invisible world, in *al-Ishārāt* and elsewhere? Considering what was just stated above, all that Ibn Sīnā tells us about the invisible world must be taken as a mere opinion that perhaps approximates the truth.

(4) The reader must recall that this whole discussion of our knowledge of the invisible world is just a part of the general discussion of the unusual signs of knowledge. Three of these signs have already been

146. *Ibid.*, p. 887.

147. *Ibid.*

148. Remember that by 'youngsters' is meant intellectual immaturity and incompetence.

That is why the youngsters are contrasted with the normal adults.

149. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 889.

mentioned: loss of appetite for food, ability to perform unusual acts, and knowledge of invisible things. The fourth type of sign is a group of acts that 'almost' cause a breach in what is customary or natural. Notice that Ibn Sīnā does not say that these acts are extraordinary or out of the natural, but that they are 'almost' so. The reason is that in reality such acts are nothing but customary and natural. They seem extraordinary only to those who do not know the mysterious natural causes of things. In other words, what looks like an extraordinary or unnatural act is ordinary and natural, but we simply fail to understand its cause or causes. This lack of understanding leads us to deny the reality of such acts. Examples of such acts include the following: (1) the knower's wish that it rain, a wish that results in rain; (2) the knower's wish that a sick person recover, a wish that results in this person's recovery; and (3) the knower's wish that a person suffer or even be destroyed, a wish that results in the suffering or destruction of that person. Other examples of such acts include the knower's making a wild animal submit and the knower's taking from a bird the need to flee.

We are now called upon to recall two points: First, the rational soul is not imprinted in the body. Rather, its relation to the body is one of administration and management. Second, the firmly established dispositions of the rational soul and their consequences, such as the imagination and feelings, can affect the body of that soul even though, in substance, that soul and its body are distinct.¹⁵⁰ The second point is illustrated in two ways. (1) Suppose there are two stumps, one suspended in empty space and the other placed on firm ground. If you are to walk on these two stumps, your imagination will make you slip more readily on the former than on the latter – that is, if your imagination is in a similar condition in both cases. The idea is that the mere belief that walking on the former stump is more risky than walking on the latter affects the movements of the body so much so that the body actually slips or perhaps even falls more easily in the former case than in the latter. (2) One's imagination can also cause either sudden or gradual temperamental changes in one's body. As usual, no examples are given, but perhaps Ibn Sīnā has something like this in mind. A sudden temperamental change is something like your turning pale at believing somebody is insulting you. A gradual temperamental change is something like your becoming physically weak as a result of a feeling of failure or a loss of a beloved. The temperamental change effected by the rational soul or any of its consequences could also be excessive, such as when, due to the rational soul or any of its consequences, the body begins to fall sick or to recover from a sickness.

150. *Ibid.*, p. 893.

Now, if it is true that the rational soul is not imprinted in the body it inhabits yet can influence the movements and temperaments of that body, then there is nothing that prevents this soul from influencing other bodies in a similar fashion.¹⁵¹ The stronger this soul, the more capable it is of extending its influence beyond the sphere of its body. In fact, there is nothing that prevents a soul from being excessively strong to the point that it can influence the body of the whole world as it influences its own body. Also, as it causes changes in its body through changing the temperamental qualities of its body, so also does it cause changes in the body of the world through changing the temperamental qualities of the body of the world. After all, the temperamental qualities of a body are the 'principles' of the acts or changes of that body.¹⁵² Therefore, if the rational soul can cause changes in the temperamental qualities of the body of the world, it can also cause changes in the body of the world through these temperamental changes. It is through the power of the knower's rational soul to make such changes in the temperamental qualities of the body of the world and, hence, in the body of the world that the knower can, for example, make it rain. This is how Ibn Sīnā explains why a knower can induce, for instance, various changes in other human and animal bodies by the knower's mere wish or thought. Such acts of the knower are neither strange nor extraordinary. Rather, they are a part of the natural process that dictates that an excessively strong soul has power over the body of the world.

It must be remembered that the principles of the changes of a certain body are implanted by nature in that body in a manner suitable to that body. Also, as noted, some of the knower's acts that look on the surface contrary to nature or supernatural are in reality in accordance with nature. Therefore, we must assume that the above-mentioned changes that the knower can induce in other bodies must be in accordance with the degree or intensity of these principles that result in changes in their bodies. However, since the knower does not and cannot act contrary to nature,¹⁵³ the knower can neither eliminate these principles from the natures of things nor implant them in those natures. Besides, even if this were possible, there is no need for it to happen, as this is the best of all possible worlds¹⁵⁴ and any change in it would make it worse. Nature does the best that can be done for this world in matching every body with the principles that can result in acts

151. *Ibid.*, p. 895.

152. *Ibid.*

153. As nothing, not even God, is given the power to interfere in the course of nature. Ibn Sīnā's cosmos is the consequence of necessity and leaves no room for any interference that could affect the basic structure of the cosmos.

154. *Ilāhiyyāt*, p. 415.

appropriate to the nature of that body. This is why a body's acts or changes over which the knower has exclusive power among people must befit that body. This means that the knower, for example, can make a human body sick or can heal it from sickness, but he cannot do the same with a stone. The reason is that a human body has the natural principle for being sick or healthy, whereas a stone does not.

Ibn Sīnā is aware that somebody may wonder how it is possible for the rational soul, which is empty of any bodily qualities, to cause changes in a body. His response is that it is not necessary for a thing to have a certain quality in order to be able to produce that quality. He reminds us that 'not everything that heats is hot, nor everything that cools is cold.'¹⁵⁵

All of this shows, according to Ibn Sīnā, that nothing makes it impossible for the rational soul to affect bodies other than its own that have the capacity to react to it as its body does. Furthermore, nothing makes it impossible for the rational soul to affect the animal powers that are linked to the other souls as it affects the animal powers that are linked to it.¹⁵⁶ This is possible especially if the rational soul has succeeded in sharpening its fixed habit of intellection by dominating its bodily powers and, hence, controlling their function. This enables it, for example, to dominate or control the power of fear of another soul. That is why a knower is said to be able to make a bird unafraid of a human being and free of the need to flee from the knower.

So far it has been determined that some souls have the power to perform some unusual acts. But why is it that some souls have this power and some do not? In other words, what is the cause that produces this power in some souls to the exclusion of other souls? Three such causes are enumerated by Ibn Sīnā: (1) the primordial temperament that distinguishes one soul from all other souls by a disposition it induces in the soul, (2) the temperament that occurs later and without acquisition, (3) the temperament that occurs later but with acquisition.¹⁵⁷ These types of temperament almost strip the soul of its material attachments due to the high degree of intelligence they induce in the soul. This state is experienced by the pious friends of God.

The power to perform the kind of unusual acts mentioned above can be employed for good or for evil purposes, apparently depending on the degree of the purity of the soul that has this power. If the soul to which this power occurs is pure, one reaches the ultimate human objective, which entitles one to perform good unusual acts of the type performed by a prophet or a friend of God. If, on the other hand, the

soul to which this power occurs is impure, one falls short of reaching the ultimate objective that the pure souls reach. In this case, the impurity of the soul uses this power for unusual bad actions, such as those of the magician.

Giving the evil eye may be another example of such evil acts. It is important to note that Ibn Sīnā does not assert that giving the evil eye is among such acts, but that it 'is almost' among such acts. This hesitation on his part to place the evil eye with definiteness in the class of evil things is perhaps due, as aṭ-Ṭūsī points out, to his awareness that the existence of the evil eye is not a matter of certainty but of opinion.¹⁵⁸ If the evil eye occurs, its occurrence can be explained on the basis of the soul's admiration of an object, which the soul then weakens by the mere force of its own character. This case appears unreasonable to someone who believes that for X to affect Y, one of the following conditions must obtain: (1) X must be in contact with Y, as fire burns a man's garment which it touches; (2) X must send a part of itself to Y, as fuels darken the air to which they send their fumes; or (3) X must transmit its character to Y through an intermediary, as an author changes somebody's view through the author's writing.¹⁵⁹ However, from what has preceded it should be clear that a thing can affect another without any of these conditions.

While, as mentioned, Ibn Sīnā considers certain dispositions of the human soul to be one source of unusual events on earth, they are by no means the only source for him of such events. He maintains that earthly unusual events can also be attributed to two other sources: certain qualities of earthly bodies and a certain relation that celestial powers have to earthly bodies and souls receptive to this relation.

Ibn Sīnā advises against rejecting a belief, such as the belief in the existence of extraordinary things, just because the commoners happen to adhere to it. He also warns against denying the existence of something just because one does not have evidence for its existence. To do so, he says, would be as much of an error as admitting its existence without having any evidence for that either. In other words, to reject or to accept anything without evidence is equally wrong. The best course of action in the absence of evidence for the existence or truth of something is neither to reject nor to accept, but simply to admit its possibility.¹⁶⁰

As indicated in the introduction, the Tenth Class closes by describing *al-Ishārāt* as 'the cream of the truth' and 'the best pieces of wisdom.'¹⁶¹

155. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 895.

156. Such powers are exemplified in the power of anger, the power of fear, and the power of appetite.

157. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, p. 897.

158. 'Commentary,' p. 899.

159. *Ishārāt*, Part Four, pp. 899-900.

160. *Ibid.*, p. 902.

161. *Ibid.*, p. 903.

The reader is then asked not to share this truth with those who cannot appreciate it. These are said to be

the ignorant, the vulgar, those who are not endowed with sharpness of mind, with skill and experience, those who lend an ear to the crowd, and who have gone astray from philosophy and have fallen behind.¹⁶²

The only person that must be trusted with this truth is said to be a person who has acquired purity of heart, goodness of conduct, an attitude of suspending judgment on matters for which there is no evidence, and satisfaction at receiving the truth.¹⁶³ But the reader is still asked to be careful to give even the right person the truth bit by bit. This gradual giving of the truth gives the one providing it the opportunity to observe how the truth is being received in order to determine whether or not to continue giving it in its fullness. Giving this truth to the wrong person or in the wrong manner is a serious matter that has to await the judgment of God. This is a warning to the reader or whoever gets hold of this truth that spreading it where inappropriate is a serious matter that calls for divine judgment.¹⁶⁴

The following three issues are worthy of discussion as we approach the end of this analysis: the kind of mysticism proposed by Ibn Sīnā, whether or not Ibn Sīnā himself was a mystic, and the influence of his mystical views on later Islamic thought.

(1) Like Plato, Plotinus, and al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā's mysticism is speculative, theoretical, or philosophical, not imaginative, practical, or non-philosophical, as it was, for example, to al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1140), or al-Rūmī (d. 1273). Ibn Sīnā would agree with al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191), one of his disciples, who claims to have reached a higher state of knowledge than that reached by Ibn Sīnā, that philosophical mysticism or Oriental wisdom is headed by Plato. Whether what is intended by 'Oriental wisdom' is the view that knowledge is the illumination of the intellect by a divine light either from God directly or from the agent intellect, or is the kind of knowledge for which people in the Orient, especially, in Persia and Greece, were known, is irrelevant for our purposes, since in the last analysis the two types of wisdom amount to the same thing, that is, illumination.

Ibn Sīnā's seeker of mysticism is one who pursues the truth independently first through the channels of the senses, and then through the theoretical intellect. This is to be contrasted with the seeker of non-philosophical Islamic mysticism, who relies on one or more shaykhs

162. Ibid., p. 904.

163. Ibid., pp. 904–5.

164. A similar threat is made at the end of *RNBM* in *Aḥwāl*, p. 154.

for guidance to the truth through the channels of purification of the body and abiding by the *shar'ā* and certain rules of conduct. While Ibn Sīnā accepts discipline of the body and its desires as something that the seeker must practice, this is so only for the purpose of distancing the senses and the theoretical intellect from any distraction. The nonphilosophical mystic, on the other hand, uses purification of the body to protect the heart and imagination from any distraction. Because Ibn Sīnā's mysticism is something that happens to the theoretical intellect, which to him is eternal by nature, and attains eternal objects, it is given eternal status. In contrast, nonphilosophical mysticism happens to the heart or imagination, which are destructible faculties, thus it would seem reasonable to assume that it perishes with the perishing of the body, which contains these faculties. It is true that, according to Ibn Sīnā, the knowledge received by the theoretical intellect may drift downward to the imagination and even to the common sense, as we have already seen in the analysis, but its proper seat is the theoretical intellect. Even though the part or kind of it that comes down to the imagination and common sense will perish with the perishing of these two faculties, this will not affect the theoretical intellect and its content.

(2) Even though Ibn Sīnā does not, as does al-Ghazālī, al-Suhrawardī, Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 1185), or Ibn 'Arabī, for example, tell us that he had any mystical experience or that he was a mystic or sufi, one would have to assume that, according to his conception of mysticism, he must have been a mystic. First, he asserts that unless one attains mystical experience, one will not know what this experience is. Nobody and nothing can give anybody knowledge about this experience other than this experience itself. But if one does not know what a thing is, one would not be able to describe it, even vaguely. Since Ibn Sīnā wrote a number of treatises on the subject, most important of which is *al-Ishārāt, Part Four*, even though always veiling it with symbolic language, one would have to assume that he knew what a mystical experience is.

Second, mysticism as understood by Ibn Sīnā seems to be an inevitable result of completing or perfecting the function of being a philosopher. In this sense, once one reaches the end of the path of philosophy, the truth will be uncovered to the theoretical intellect. Even though one may distinguish between philosophy as such and mysticism – the former being scientific or indirect knowledge, the latter illuminative or direct knowledge – once one perfects the former, one finds oneself in the latter. The latter is nothing other than the inevitable fruit of the former. That is why Ibn Sīnā's type of mysticism was referred to above as 'speculative, theoretical, or philosophical.' To put the matter differently, imagine the seeker of philosophy as required to

climb a ladder of one hundred steps. During the process of climbing, the seeker is doing philosophy. However, once the final or one hundredth step is made, the seeker sees things in a different light. One may, therefore, say that at some point, the final or ultimate level of philosophy, philosophy and mysticism happen simultaneously. It is as if to say that when you are outdoors at twelve noon, you will see the light on an ordinary day in the United States. Being outdoors at that time and seeing the light are not the same but they happen simultaneously. Similarly, taking the ultimate step on the ladder of philosophy and being a mystic are not the same, but if the former happens, the latter necessarily happens at the same time. In this regard it must be said that Ibn Sīnā would not have understood as-Suhrwardī's charge that Ibn Sīnā was a philosopher, not a mystic, nor would Ibn Bājja (d. 1138) have understood the same charge made against him by Ibn Ṭufayl. To determine whether or not Ibn Sīnā was a mystic it is sufficient to determine whether or not he was a philosopher in the true sense in which he understands the word. He says that 'philosophy' is used in two senses: the sense of the study of 'things inasmuch as they exist and are divided into the two types of existence,' meaning the external and the mental, and the sense of the study of 'every theoretical matter and from every point of view.'¹⁶⁵ The only thing we can go by in this regard are his works, his words, and the words of others about him, all of which indicate that he was a philosopher of the first rank, whether in the former or the latter sense.

The reason for not declaring his personal mystical experience may be the same as that for not calling this experience by its proper name. Perhaps it was fear of rejection or persecution with which mystics were met at that time that led him to take this stand. More likely, though, it was fear of being misunderstood and mistaken for explicating a broader sense of mysticism and declaring his indulgence in that way of life. His concern about protecting his ideas from those who may misunderstand them, the nonphilosophers and those who are not endowed with high intellects, is most evident at the end of *al-Ishārāt*, as we have already seen. This concern was justified, considering the differences between the general meaning of 'mysticism' prevalent in those days and the specific kind of mysticism he proposes, and considering his lack of confidence in the intellectual abilities of the multitudes to understand these differences.

(3) Ibn Sīnā's Oriental philosophy primarily as embodied in *al-Ishārāt* had great influence on later philosophical and sufi circles. To give but

165. Ibn Sīnā, *Madkhal*, eds George Qanawātī, Mahmūd al-Khudayrī, and Fu'ād al-Ahwānī (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Amrīyya, 1952), pp. 15-16.

one clear example, *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, Ibn Ṭufayl's masterpiece, is said by its author to be an exposition of some of 'the secrets of Oriental wisdom, as mentioned by ash-Shaykh, al-Imām, ar-Ra'īs Abū 'Alī Ibn Sīnā.'¹⁶⁶ While the title of this treatise is borrowed from Ibn Sīnā's other mystical treatise, *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, its ideas are basically those of *al-Ishārāt*. In the introduction to this work, Ibn Ṭufayl presents some of the views of his predecessors, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Bājja. Al-Fārābī is strongly criticized for what is said to be his inconsistent view concerning the second life. Ibn Bājja's views are said to be incomplete, mentioning the highest speculative state, not the state above it which is the state of 'witnessing' or mystical experience. While al-Ghazālī's mystical experience is not said to be in doubt, no work of his on mystical knowledge is said to have reached the author. Ibn Sīnā's works, including *al-Ishārāt*, not only seem to have reached the author, as he refers to them more than once, but are alone excluded from criticism. Long passages from the Ninth Class of *al-Ishārāt*, Part Four are cited to illustrate the state of 'witnessing' or mystical experience.¹⁶⁷

When reading Ibn Ṭufayl's description of the mystical experience in *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, one is immediately reminded of Ibn Sīnā's description of this experience in *al-Ishārāt*. Like Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Ṭufayl says that no human sight, hearing, or speech could grasp this state, as it lies beyond the world of nature and sense experience. Therefore, no explanation, but only mere signs can be given of it. One who seeks explanation of it is like one who seeks 'the taste of colors inasmuch as they are colors.'¹⁶⁸ Only direct experience of this state can verify it. Like Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Ṭufayl believes that human language is an inadequate instrument for expressing the truth; it can only hint at it or make allusions (*ishārāt*) to it.¹⁶⁹

If the hidden science, however, is inexpressible in language, why did Ibn Ṭufayl engage in a lengthy discourse about it, as did Ibn Sīnā before him? This kind of discourse, Ibn Ṭufayl would assert, will be understood by the philosopher and will give a glimpse of these secrets to the weak-minded to pull them to the right direction and stop them at the limit beyond which they cannot venture. But if the work can give a glimpse of these secrets, then these secrets are not altogether inexpressible in language. Ibn Ṭufayl, like Ibn Sīnā, seems to hold that language may give a hint or general idea about the hidden world, an idea sufficient to make those incapable of reaching the ultimate state desire the right path and avoid adhering to the corrupt opinions of the

166. *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, ed. Muḥammad Naṣrallā (Beirut: Dār Filasṭīn lit-Ta'līf wat-Tarjama, 1970), p. 17.

167. Ibid., p. 19.

168. Ibid., p. 81.

169. Ibid. See also pp. 84, 86, and 87.

day. But while the 'thin veil' with which the truth is covered may help the multitudes desire the right path, it will not help them understand the truth any better. On the contrary, this veil is thickened for them and broken only by those capable of grasping the truth.

Ibn Sīnā's mystical writings, especially *al-Ishārāt*, were a rich source from which not only Ibn Ṭufayl, but other later philosophers and sufis borrowed heavily, even where no acknowledgement of that is made, as in the case of Ibn Bājja or Ibn 'Arabī.

REMARKS AND ADMONITIONS

Part Four
SUFISM (p. 747)

Eighth Class (*Namat*)¹ (p. 749) On Joy and Happiness

CHAPTER ONE

Delusion and Admonition Concerning the Inferiority of Sense Pleasures

It had occurred to the common minds that strong and lofty pleasures are those of the senses,² while other pleasures are weak and are all unreal objects of the imagination.

It is possible to draw the attention of one who belongs to this group and who is capable of distinction. Thus, it can be said to this person: Is not sex, food, and what resembles them the most pleasurable thing in this class that you describe (p. 750)? However, you know that one who is capable of a particular victory, even in a trivial matter, such as chess or backgammon, would reject food or sex if presented with them.³ This is due to the imagined pleasures of victory that one experiences. Again, food and sex may be presented to one who seeks chastity and control over the health of one's body for the sake of decency.⁴ One withdraws one's hand from both food and sex in consideration for decency. Thus, the consideration for decency is unavoidably preferable and more desirable than sex and food. Furthermore, if generous people experience the pleasure of offering to others something appropriate to themselves, they prefer that to experiencing pleasure in an object of animal desire, concerning which there is rivalry. They prefer others over themselves with respect to the former thing, and rush to offer it to them. Similarly, one who has dignity considers hunger and thirst as

1. It was pointed out in Part Two of *Remarks and Admonitions* that *namat*, which could mean 'manner,' 'model,' 'type,' or 'class,' has been translated in the main titles of the last three parts of this work as 'class,' since every *namat* in these titles seems to be intended by Ibn Sina to refer to a class of certain issues (*Remarks and Admonitions*, Part Two, First Class, Chapter One, in preparation for publication).

2. That is, the external senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. This becomes clear from the fact that in the following lines, Ibn Sina attempts to dispel this illusion by showing that the pleasure of the only other type of senses, that is, the internal senses to be discussed later, is higher than that of the senses mentioned in the 'Delusion' of this chapter.

3. That is, if one is given the choice between victory in such games and sensuous pleasures.

4. Text: *ma' shihat jismih*, ft *shhat hishmat*. Literally, with the health of one's body, accompanied by decency.

slight in comparison with the preservation of honor (p. 751) and considers the fear of death and the suddenness of destruction as base in comparison with the victory of the combatants. One may push one's way through a large number of individuals, endangering oneself for the sake of the pleasure one expects to derive from praise even after death – as if praise would reach one when one is dead.

Thus, it has been made clear that the internal pleasures are higher than those of the senses. This is so not only in rational beings but also in speechless animals. There are hunting dogs that capture prey while they are hungry but save it for their master and sometimes carry it to him. Again, animals that nurse prefer their babies to themselves and sometimes take a risk for protecting their babies greater than the risk they take for protecting themselves.

Therefore, if the internal pleasures are greater than the external ones, even though the former are not intellectual, then what would you think of the intellectual pleasures?

CHAPTER TWO

A Follow-up Concerning the Superiority of the Pleasures of Divine States in Comparison with the Pleasures of Bestial States (p. 752)

We must not listen to one who exclaims thus:⁵ 'If we reach a state in which we do not eat, drink, or have sex, then what kind of happiness will there be for us?' Whoever says this must be given insight by being told: 'You feeble-minded person! Perhaps the state that belongs to the angels and to the beings that are superior to them is more pleasurable, more enjoyable, and more comfortable than that which belongs to the beasts. Indeed, how could there be a relation of one of these two states to the other – a relation on which one can rely in determining the degree of pleasure?'⁷

5. Text: *qawī man yaqūl* (the statement of one who says).

6. Text: *yā miskīn*.

7. In other words, a state in which there is no physical pleasure, such as the state of celestial beings, may be more pleasurable than a state in which there is physical pleasure, such as the state of animals – if a comparison can be drawn between the pleasure of these two states. However, the truth is that no such comparison can be drawn because the natures of the perfections of these two states are different. But, as we will soon see, the nature of a perfection helps determine the resulting type of pleasure. Therefore, if two perfections are of different natures, as are the perfections of the above-mentioned states, then the pleasures of such states fall into different types. This leaves no room for comparing the two pleasures on the basis of commonality.

CHAPTER THREE

Admonition Concerning the Nature of Pleasure and That of Pain (p. 753)

Pleasure is the apprehension (*idrāk*) of,⁸ and full arrival at, that which, according to the apprehender, is a perfection and a good inasmuch as it is such (p. 754). Pain, on the other hand, is the apprehension of, and full arrival at, that which, according to the apprehender, is a defect and an evil (p. 756).

The difference between good and evil may be relative. Thus, what is good for the appetite is something like suitable food and suitable objects of touch. What is good for the irascible power is dominance. Also, what is good for the intellect is sometimes, and from a certain perspective, the Truth; and sometimes, and from another perspective,⁹ good deeds. Among the intellectual goods, there is also attainment of gratitude and the abundance of praise, appreciation, and dignity.¹⁰ In short, the concerns of those who are endowed with intellects are different with respect to these goods (p. 757).

Whatever is good in relation to a certain thing is the perfection proper to that thing and toward which that thing is inclined due to its primary preparation.¹¹ Every pleasure depends on two things: attainment of a perfection that is good and an apprehension of this perfection inasmuch as it is such.

8. The term *idrāk* has a number of meanings, among which are the following: 'grasping,' 'realization,' 'attainment,' 'perception,' and 'apprehension.' Since Ibn Sīnā uses this term not in the sense of mechanical reaching, grasping, or possessing of a thing but in the sense of becoming aware of it, it seems that 'perception' or 'apprehension' would be a good choice. 'Perception' was avoided since it is usually used to mean only sense awareness and does not cover rational or intellectual awareness. But Ibn Sīnā uses this term in a general sense to cover both kinds of awareness.

9. These two perspectives refer respectively to the two aspects of the rational soul: the theoretical and the practical. In other words, the perfection of the theoretical intellect is to know the Truth, while the perfection of the practical intellect is to do good deeds.

10. These goods belong to the rational soul, but in association with the powers of the body. The rational being's concerns with these goods are of different degrees because bodily powers, which are a factor in the makeup of these goods, are different.

11. In other words, the perfection of a thing is not just any good but only that which is good in relation to that thing. Sight, for example, is good, but it is not the perfection of the stomach or the ear. It is the perfection only of the eye. Everything has a primary or natural preparation (to be distinguished from a secondary or an acquired preparation) which inclines that thing towards its perfection. This primary or natural inclination operates as a test for whether or not something is a perfection for a certain thing.

CHAPTER FOUR

Delusion and Admonition Concerning Why Certain Good Sensible States Are Attained Yet Not Found Pleasurable (p. 758)

Someone may think that among perfections and goods there are those in which there is no pleasure appropriate to their attainment, such as health and safety. Thus, one does not find in them as much pleasure as one would find in sweets and some other things.

After tolerance of this kind of doubt, we answer such a person by admitting that the condition for the occurrence of pleasure is that both acquisition and awareness are required.¹² If the sensible states endure, one will not be aware of them. However, one who has been sick for a long time finds a great pleasure when returning to one's natural state unexpectedly and with obvious progress.¹³

CHAPTER FIVE

Admonition Concerning Why Certain Pleasurable Things Are Attained Yet Disliked (p. 759)

The pleasurable may be attained and then disliked, as some sick people dislike sweets in addition to not having appetite for such objects as they have had earlier. This is not a refutation of what has preceded, for such objects are not good in this state since the senses are not aware of them inasmuch as they are good.

CHAPTER SIX

Admonition Concerning the Obstacles to Pleasure (p. 760)

If we wish to make the explication of pleasure clearer – in addition to the wealth of information that has already preceded concerning it – at one's sensitive request for understanding it, we add, saying: Pleasure is the apprehension of such and such inasmuch as it is such and such, without the preoccupation of, or opposition to, the apprehender. If the apprehender is not healthy and free from preoccupation, it is possible that he does not become aware of the condition for pleasure. The unhealthy is like one who rejects sweets when having a sick stomach. The unfree from preoccupation is like one who is very full and rejects delicious food. If the impediment in the way of each of these two is

12. See Chapter Three of the present class.

13. Text: *ghayr kbafiyiyy at-tadrīj* (with no concealed progress).

removed, their pleasure and appetite will return, and if what they now dislike is held back, they will be in pain.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Admonition Concerning the Obstacles to Pain (p. 761)

Similarly, the cause of pain may be present when the power of apprehension has already degenerated, as in the nearness of death, or is hampered, as in being under anesthesia. Thus, one is not pained by it. But if the power is revived or the obstacle removed, then the pain becomes greater.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Admonition Concerning the Insufficiency of Rational Certitude for Producing Either Desire for Pleasure or Avoidance of Pain and the Need of Experience for Producing Either

It may be that one can affirm a certain pleasure with certainty, but if the notion called 'taste' (*dhawq*)¹⁴ does not occur, it is permissible for us not to find desire for this pleasure. Similarly, one can affirm a certain harm with certainty, but if the notion called 'being subject to suffering' (*al-muqāsāt*)¹⁵ does not occur, it is permissible not to be highly cautious of this harm (p. 762). An example of the former is the pleasure of sexual union with respect to one in the state of natural impotence. An example of the latter is suffering from fever with respect to one in the state of not having been subject to a long illness.

14. That is, the attainment or experience of an object as pleasurable. This is to be differentiated from the mere apprehension of that object as pleasurable. The idea is that without the former, one will not desire that object. It had already been said also that without the former, one will not have pleasure. It can be argued then that, by substitution, without having pleasure in a certain object, one will desire that object.

15. *Al-muqāsāt* is to be opposed to *dhawq*. The former refers to the attainment or experience of a painful object, which is to be differentiated from the mere apprehension of that painful object. Without such an attainment or experience, one will not avoid that object. Also, it has been said that without such an attainment or experience, one will not find that object painful. It follows that without finding an object painful, one will not avoid that object.

CHAPTER NINE

Admonition Concerning the Determination of Pleasure by the Degree of the Object's Perfection and the Degree of the Subject's Apprehension

Every pleasurable thing is a cause of a perfection that occurs to an apprehender and that, in relation to that apprehender, is a good (p. 763). Furthermore, there is no doubt that perfections and their apprehensions differ. Thus, the perfection of the appetite, for example, is such that the organ of taste acquires the quality of sweetness drawn from the matter of this quality. If something like this occurs not due to an external cause, pleasure will also subsist. The same is true of the powers of touch,¹⁶ smell,¹⁷ and what resembles them.¹⁸ The perfection of the irascible power is such that the soul acquires the quality of dominance, or the quality of perceiving that harm occurs to the one who is the subject of anger. The perfection of the estimative power is the acquisition of a disposition of the object that this power aspires to or remembers.

This is also the case with the other powers (p. 764). The perfection of the rational substance is such that the clarity of the First Truth is represented in it inasmuch as this substance can attain the proper beauty of this Truth. After that, the whole of existence is represented in this substance, as this existence is free from material attachments – beginning, after the First Truth, with the exalted intellectual substances (p. 765). This is followed by the celestial spiritual substances, the celestial bodies, and then the objects posterior to them. This representation is not distinct from the essences of the objects apprehended. This is the perfection by virtue of which the intellectual substance becomes actual (p. 766). However, what was mentioned earlier is the animal perfection. The intellectual apprehension penetrates to the essence and is free from material attachments. On the other hand, the sense apprehension is made completely of material attachments. The number of the detailed objects of the intellectual apprehension is hardly limited, while the sensible ones are limited to a small number. If the latter multiply, they do so by more and the less intensity (p. 767). It is known that the relation of a pleasure to another is the same as that of an object apprehended to another, as well as that of an apprehension to another. Thus, the relation of the intellectual pleasure to that of the appetite is

16. Text: *mal'mās* (the object of touch).

17. Text: *mal'smām* (the object of smell).

18. That is, the other external senses that share with the powers of touch and smell the fact that their objects of pleasure can be either external, as when one actually sees a beautiful painting, or internal, as when one imagines or dreams that one sees such a painting.

that of the clarity of the First Truth and what follows It to the attainment of the quality of sweetness, and also that of the two apprehensions.

CHAPTER TEN

Admonition Concerning Bodily Preoccupations as Obstacles to Desiring Rational Perfection and to Feeling Pain in the Presence of the Opposite of This Perfection (p. 768)

Now, if you are in the body with its preoccupations and attachments, and you do not desire your proper perfection and are not pained by the presence of the opposite of this perfection, you must know that this is due to you and not to this perfection, and that in you, there are causes of this, some of which I have already pointed out.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Admonition Concerning the Nature of Bodily Preoccupations and Their Effects in the Life to Come (p. 769)

You must know that these preoccupations are, as you have learned (p. 770),¹⁹ reactions and dispositions that follow the soul due to its closeness to the body. If these preoccupations endure after the separation,²⁰ you will be the same after the separation as you were before it. But they will be like persisting pains, for they were the source of action, and now no action can be attributed to them. Thus, they are apprehended inasmuch as they are negations. This pain, which corresponds to something like that pleasure that has been described above, is the pain of the spiritual fire that exceeds the pain of the bodily fire.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Admonition Concerning the Two Main Types of Vices of the Soul

Furthermore, you must know that a soul's vice that belongs to the genus of the deficiency of preparation for the perfection that is hoped for after the separation of the soul from the body (p. 771) is not imposed after the separation. Also, that vice which is due to extrinsic

19. *Ishārāt, Part Two*, pp. 356–8.

20. That is, of the soul from the body.

attachments is removed after the separation, and suffering due to it does not endure.²¹

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Admonition Concerning the Various Effects of the Vice of Deficiency (p. 772)

You must know that the vice of deficiency harms only the soul that desires perfection. This desire is a consequence of the alertness that is the product of acquisition (p. 773). The unalert are not touched by this suffering. Rather, this suffering belongs only to the ungrateful, to the negligent, and to those who shrug from the Truth that is given to them with clarity. Thus, unalertness is closer to salvation than is sharp discernment.²²

21. According to this chapter, people are divided into two groups: (1) those who naturally lack the preparation for their perfection, such as one who is born with no capacity for grasping the essences of things or truths, or one who is born with no capacity for distinguishing good from bad deeds; and (2) those who acquire the lack of their perfection, such as one who is born with the capacity for knowing and doing good deeds but learns to steal. The former do not suffer after death, because their vice dies at the time of the death of the body, and the soul that continues to exist has not learned any vices. The latter suffer, but their suffering does not endure because the causes of their vices, that is, the bodily actions and temperaments, do not endure after the separation of the soul from the body. The soul retains the memory of them for a while, but then even this memory dies out.

However, we know that, according to Ibn Sina, there is also a third group that differs from the first group in that the vice of its individuals is acquired, and from the second group in that the vice of its individuals is the lack of the most proper human perfection, namely, knowledge of the truths, including, and beginning with, the knowledge of God. The vice of this third group continues eternally because the soul's ignorance after death continues eternally since the soul has lost the body, which it needs as an instrument for knowledge. Suffering for this kind of soul is, therefore, eternal (cf. *Isharat*, Part Three, pp. 737-41).

22. In other words, if you acquire the awareness that a thing is suitable or good for you, you will desire that thing. If you desire it and do not attain it, you will suffer. This is to say that, for example, if a thing is good for both you and me, but you are aware of this fact and I am not, and if neither of us attains it, you will suffer and I will not. This is because you will desire it and I will not. The conclusion drawn is this: 'unalertness is closer to salvation than sharp discernment.' The statement, 'It is better not to know than to know,' holds true here, but only if the object concerned is the perfection of the person in question, and if this person does not possess this object.

Those who suffer because they know their perfection but do not possess it fall into three groups: (1) the ungrateful, that is, those who acquire the opposite of their perfection such that they deny the reality of this perfection even though they admit its existence; (2) the negligent, that is, those who are too lazy to make any effort to acquire their perfection; (3) those who are too distracted from acquiring their perfection, due not to its opposite, but to something else (cf. al-Tust, 'Commentary,' p. 773).

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Admonition Concerning the Manner in Which Knowers Attain Happiness (p. 774)

If the knowers and those who are above imperfection shed of themselves the pollution of the relation to the body and are released from preoccupation with the body, they will reach the world of saintliness and happiness, and the highest perfection will be engraved in them.²³ They will achieve the highest pleasure about which you have already learned.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Admonition Concerning the Attainment of This Happiness While in the Body (p. 775)

This pleasure is not completely lacking when the soul is in the body. Rather, those who indulge in reflecting on the divine power and who abandon preoccupations with the body achieve, while in the body, an abundant portion of this pleasure, which may take hold of them, thus distracting them from everything else.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Admonition Concerning the State of the Souls That Are Prepared for Perfection (p. 776)

If the pure souls that are left to their nature and that have not been stiffened by interaction with the hard, earthy things hear a spiritual call indicating the states after the separation, they will be overcome by a desire whose cause is not known and will be stricken by a strong love accompanied by a joy-causing pleasure. This leads those souls to wonder and astonishment due to the appropriateness that the above-mentioned states have to those souls. This appropriateness is the subject of intense experience and is among the best motives. One whose motive is such is not satisfied except by the completion of insight into the Truth (p. 777). But one whose motive is to seek praise and rivalry is

23. That is, if people set themselves free from the polluted relation to the body or from any preoccupation with the body and have a theoretical intellect that knows the essences of things and a practical intellect that raises them above ill deeds, they will attain the greater happiness, which consists of their having their highest perfection, which, in turn, consists of having the essences of things engraved in the soul. This can happen only when the rational soul turns away from the body, thus becoming ready for the reception of the essences.

satisfied by reaching one's goal. The former is the state of the knowers' pleasure.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Admonition Concerning the Second Life of Those That Are Intellectually Incompetent

As regards the unalert, if they raise themselves above imperfections, they will be set free from the body and will reach the happiness that befits them. But perhaps even in this state of relative happiness, they do not dispense with the assistance of a body which is the subject of their imaginations (p. 778). It is not impossible that this body be a celestial body or the like.²⁴ Perhaps this leads them eventually to the preparation for the happiness-causing conjunction that the knowers enjoy (p. 779).

Transmigration into bodies of the same genus that the soul had inhabited is impossible; otherwise, every temperament would require that a soul emanate to it and be joined by the transmigrated soul (p. 780). Thus, there would be two souls for one animal. Furthermore, it is not necessary that all annihilation be linked to generation, nor that the number of bodies be the same as that of the separate souls that are joined to them, nor that a number of separate souls deserve one body (p. 781) to which they are then joined, and from which they are repelled due to mutual resistance. Facilitate this subject and seek help where you find it in our views elsewhere.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Remark Concerning the Hierarchy of the Happiness of Rational Beings (p. 782)

The being that has the greatest joy in a thing is the First as having joy in His essence. This is because of all things, He has the strongest apprehension of an object that, of all things, has the most complete perfection – this object being free from the nature of possibility and privation, which are the two sources of evil. Furthermore, nothing distracts the First from His essence.

Real love is the joy of having conception of the presence of a certain essence. Yearning, on the other hand, is the movement toward completing this joy if the concept is represented from (p. 783) one

point of view (as it is represented in the imagination), and not represented from another point of view (as it happens to be not represented in the senses, that is, in the manner in which²⁵ a sensible thing has a complete sensible representation). Thus, every being that yearns has already attained a certain thing while missing out on a certain other thing (p. 784). As for love, it is another notion.

The First loves His essence and is loved by His essence, whether or not He is loved by other beings. But He is not unloved by other beings. Rather, due to His essence, He is loved by His essence and by many other things (p. 785). Those that have joy in Him and in themselves (inasmuch as they have joy in Him) come after Him in having joy. These are the saintly intellectual substances. No yearning can be attributed to the First, the True, nor to those that follow and that are among His sincere, saintly devotees. The rank of the yearning lovers comes after the above two ranks. Inasmuch as these beings are lovers, they have already attained something and, thus, they have pleasure. But inasmuch as they yearn, some types of them might be touched by a certain harm (p. 786). However, since the harm is from the side of the object loved, it is a pleasurable harm. Sensible things, such as the state of the harm of scratching or being tickled, may have a very remote resemblance to this kind of harm²⁶ – this state may be imagined as something far from harm. Such yearning is a principle for a certain movement. If this movement leads to the attainment of the object sought, the search will cease and the joy will be real. If the human souls attain the highest ecstasy possible in the present life, their highest states will be to love and to yearn, and not to be free from the link of yearning except in the other life (p. 787).

After the above souls, come other human souls that waver between the two sides: that of divinity and that of baseness in its various degrees. These are followed by the souls that are immersed in the world of the ill-fated nature, whose inverted necks do not have junctures.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Admonition Concerning the Love and Yearning That Natural Beings Have for Their Perfections

If you study things and reflect on them, you will find that every corporeal thing has a proper perfection (p. 788), a voluntary or a natural love for this perfection, as well as a voluntary or a natural yearning

25. Text: *hattā* (so that).

26. Perhaps the remoteness of the similarity of the two types of harm is due to the fact that the former is sensible while the latter is non-sensible.

24. As has been pointed out earlier, *al-Mabda' wal-Ma'ad* indicates that 'the like' refers to the bodies that may be 'generated from air or smoke' (see, p. 115).

for it when it is separated from it. This is mercy from the First Providence in the manner according to which It is Providence.

This is a summary. In the detailed sciences,²⁷ you find an elaboration of it.

Ninth Class (p. 789) On the Stations of the Knowers

CHAPTER ONE

Admonition Concerning the Stations of the Knowers

In their present lives, the knowers have stations and ranks that are reserved for them to the exclusion of others. It is as if, while being clothed by their bodies, they have shed their bodies, become free from them, and attained the world of saintliness (p. 790). To them belong things concealed in them²⁸ and things manifested by them.²⁹ The latter are protested against by those who deny them and are considered as great by those who know them. We will relate these things to you.

If your hearing is stricken by one of the things that strikes your hearing and if, among the things you hear, the story of Salamān and Absāl is related to you (p. 791), then you must know that Salamān is given as an example of yourself (p. 792), and Absāl is given as an example of your rank in knowledge – if you are among those who know (p. 793). Solve the riddle if you can.³⁰

CHAPTER TWO

Admonition Concerning the Difference Among the Ascetic, the Worshiper, and the Knower (p. 799)

The name 'ascetic' is reserved for one who shuns the delights and goods of this world (p. 800). The name 'worshiper' is reserved for one who persists in exercising worship by prostration, fasting, and what resembles them. The name 'knower' is reserved for one who disposes one's thought toward the sanctity of divine power, seeking the perpetual illumination of the light of the Truth into one's innermost thought.³¹ Some of the above-mentioned definitions may be combined with each other.

27. Such as *Risāla fī al-'Ishq* (Essay on Love).

28. That is, the divine things that they see.

29. That is, the extraordinary things that they do.

30. For a discussion of this, see Analysis of the Text, pp. 31–2.

31. Text: *fī sirrih*.

CHAPTER THREE

Admonition Concerning the Difference Between the Asceticism and Worship of the Knower and Those of the Nonknower (p. 801)

Asceticism for one who is not a knower is a kind of business deal, as if one buys the delights of the second life with the delights of the present one. But for the knower it is a kind of abstinence from that which distracts one's innermost thought from the Truth and an elevation over everything other than the Truth.

Worship for one who is not a knower is a kind of business deal, as if one acts in the present life for a salary that one will receive in the second life as a retribution and a reward. But for the knower, it is a kind of exercise of one's faculties (*himamih*), including the estimative and imaginative powers of one's soul, to orient them by habit from the side of error to the side of the Truth. Thus, they become receptive to the private innermost thought of the soul, so that, when this thought seeks the revelation of the Truth, these powers will not be in conflict with it (p. 802). Hence, the innermost thought arrives at the bright illumination. This arrival becomes a well established habit. Whenever the innermost thought wishes, it views the light of the Truth without being rivaled by these faculties, instead, being warmly accompanied by them. Thus, the innermost thought will be totally involved in attaining sanctity.

CHAPTER FOUR

Remark Concerning the Social Need for a Religious Law and for a Prophet

Since a human being is not such that on his own he achieves independence in his personal affairs except by sharing with another being of his type through the exchange and commutative contract that are made between them – each of them setting his companion free from some occupation which, if the companion himself were to undertake, many things would accumulate for that individual (p. 803) (if this were possible to manage, it would be among the difficult things) – that is why it is necessary to have among people transactions and justice preserved by a law imposed by a legislator. This legislator is distinguished by meriting obedience due to his special possession of signs that indicate that they are from the Lord (p. 804). It is also necessary that the performer of good deeds and the performer of bad deeds be retributed by their Lord, the Powerful and the Knower. Thus, knowledge concerning (p. 805) the retributer and the legislator is necessary (p. 806). In

addition to knowledge, it is necessary to have a cause of retaining knowledge. Therefore, worship, which reminds one of the Object of worship, is imposed on people to be repeated by them³² in order that they preserve the remembrance by repetition (p. 807) until the call for justice that sustains the life of the species becomes known. Those who practice this worship have abundant reward in the second life, in addition to the great benefit they have in the present life. Furthermore, for those who practice it and are knowers, a benefit reserved for them is added, inasmuch as they turn their faces toward Him (p. 808).

Thus, reflect on the wisdom, mercy, (p. 809) and grace of God; you will notice an aspect whose marvels dazzle you. After that, establish the law and be upright.³³

CHAPTER FIVE

Remark Concerning the Proper Objective of the Knower (p. 810)

The knower seeks the First Truth not for anything other than Itself and prefers nothing to the knowledge and worship of It alone (other than, of course, Itself).³⁴ This is because the First Truth merits worship, and because worship is a noble relation to It (p. 811), and not because of desire or fear. If desire or fear were present, the desired object (p. 812) or the feared object would be the motive (p. 813) and the object of the search (p. 814). The Truth then would not be the end, but a

32. Text: *wa-kurriyat 'alaibim*.

33. This view, whose seeds are found in Plato and al-Fārābī, asserts the following: (1) A human being requires other human beings for the fulfillment of his needs. (2) This requires social cooperation. (3) Social cooperation requires justice. (4) Justice requires the presence of law. (5) The presence of law requires a legislator to enact the law. (6) The legislator must have special qualities that distinguish him from others and that command their obedience to him. (7) Among these qualities, one finds the manifestations of signs, such as extraordinary behavior which indicates that the law enacted is divine – this legislator is a prophet. (8) The law must impose on people hope and fear through retribution by God, Who knows everything and Who has power over everything so that they would do the good and refrain from doing the bad. (9) The fear and hope from retribution require that people know God, the Retributer, and the legislator, the human being who conveys knowledge of retribution to them. (10) In order to establish this knowledge in their soul, people must practice worship, which consists of repetitive remembrance of God. (11) The worshipers will reap benefits both in this life and in the second life. The knowers among them have, in addition to this, a vision of the Truth that gives them blissful eternity.

34. See the passage that will follow in Chapter Twenty of the present class: *'Man athar al-'irfān lil-'irfān fa-qad qāl bihi-thān'* (he who prefers knowledge for the sake of knowledge professes belief in knowledge). The knower differs from those nonknowers who also seek knowledge of the Truth and practice asceticism and worship of God in that the former does so only for the sake of the Truth, while the latter do so for the sake of gaining reward.

eans to something other than It – this something being the end (p. 815) and the object of the search, to the exclusion of the Truth.

CHAPTER SIX

Remark Concerning the Difference Between One Who Seeks the Truth as an Intermediary and One Who Seeks It for Its Own Sake (p. 816)

He who finds it permissible to place the Truth in an intermediary position receives mercy, but only in some manner; for he is not given the pleasure of having joy in the Truth so that he can seek this pleasure. His knowledge of pleasure is only of that which is by nature incomplete. Hence, he longs for this incomplete pleasure, disregarding that which is beyond it. Those who resemble him are in relation to the knowers just as young boys are in relation to those who are well experienced. Since young boys neglect the goods that are guarded by those who are mature, and since the experience of the former is limited to the goods of playing, the former become astonished at serious people when the latter turn away from the goods of playing, detest them, and resort to other things (p. 817).

Similarly, he whose vision is curbed by deficiency from encountering the joy of grasping the Truth sticks his two palms to the pleasure that surrounds him, that is, the false type of pleasure. Thus, in the present life, he abandons this false type of pleasure unwillingly, and does not abandon it except for seeking double its amount in the second life. He worships God, the exalted, and obeys Him only so that God would grant him in the second life satiation of this pleasure such that he would proceed to delicious food, good water (p. 818), and beautiful sex.

If one turns away from the Truth, one's vision cannot be raised – whether in the present or in the other life – except to the pleasures of one's belly and memory. But he who, by way of preference, seeks insight through the guidance of sanctity, has known the real pleasure and turned his face toward it, seeking mercy upon him who is led away from the right conduct to its opposite, even though what the latter seeks by his effort will be generously given to him in accordance with what he had been promised.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Remark Concerning the First Preparatory Stage, Willingness, in the Knower's Movement Toward the Truth

The first step in the knowers' movement is that which they themselves call 'willingness' (*al-irada*). This is the desire that overcomes the seeker of insight – either by demonstrative certainty (p. 819) or by tranquility of the soul due to the confirmation of faith – to establish a strong relation to the world of sanctity (p. 820). Thus, his march proceeds to sanctity in order to attain the spirit of conjunction. Therefore, as long as he remains on this level, he is an adept (*murid*).

CHAPTER EIGHT

Remark Concerning the Second Preparatory Stage, Spiritual Exercise

Furthermore, the knower needs spiritual exercise. This kind of exercise is directed toward three goals (p. 821). The first is to remove from the path of choice whatever is other than the Truth. The second is to render the commanding soul³⁵ obedient to the tranquil soul³⁶ so that the power of imagination and that of estimation will be attracted to the ideas proper to the saintly affairs, abandoning those ideas that are proper to base things (p. 822). The third is to render the innermost thought sensitive to attention.

The first is assisted by real asceticism (p. 823). The second is assisted by a number of things: worship accompanied by thought (p. 824), tunes employed by the powers of the soul for rendering the words put to the tune acceptable to the mind (p. 825), and, finally, didactic words themselves that come from an intelligent speaker in an eloquent phrase, in a soft tune, and that involve some guidance (p. 826). As for the third goal, it is assisted by sensitive thought (p. 827) and pure love, which is commanded by the qualities of the beloved and not by the rule of the appetite.

35. That is, the animal soul.

36. That is, the rational soul.

CHAPTER NINE

Remark Concerning the First Step in Conjunction, Moments (p. 828)

Furthermore, if the will and spiritual exercise bring the knower to a certain limit, he will encounter pleasurable stolen looks at the light of the Truth, as if these looks are lightning that shines over the knower and then turns away from him. These stolen looks are what they call 'moments' (*awqāt*). Every moment is surrounded by two ecstasies: an ecstasy for the Truth and an ecstasy over the passing away of the Truth. After that, these overwhelming moments multiply if the knower persists in the spiritual exercise.

CHAPTER TEN

Remark Concerning the Second Step, Seeing the Truth in Everything Once Conjunction with the Truth Becomes a Fixed Habit (p. 829)

He is then absorbed in those overwhelming moments until they overcome him even while not exercising. Thus, whenever he catches a glimpse of a thing, he returns from that thing to the side of sanctity, remembering something of the latter. He is then overcome by a fainting spell. Thus, he almost sees the Truth in everything.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Remark Concerning the Third Step, Reaction to the Experience of Conjunction Before and After Familiarity with the Truth

Perhaps on his way to this limit, his veils are lifted up for him, and he ceases to be calm. Thus, the knower's companion pays attention to the knower's being provoked out of his stability. If his spiritual exercise is prolonged, he will not be provoked by the lifting up of any veil and will be guided to conceal his experience.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Remark Concerning the Fourth Step, Effects on the Soul of Familiarity with the Truth (p. 830)

After that, spiritual exercise carries him to a point at which his moment is converted into tranquility. Thus, that which is stolen becomes familiar, and the lightning becomes a clear flame. He acquires a stable

knowledge of the Truth, as if this knowledge is a continuous accompaniment in which he delights in the rapture of the Truth. If he turns away from this knowledge, he will do so with loss and regret.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Remark Concerning the Fifth Step, Manifestations Contrary to Inner Experience Due to Further Delving into Knowledge (p. 831)

Perhaps up to this point, he manifests what he undergoes. But if he delves into this knowledge, there will be less manifestation of this experience. Thus, he will be present while being absent, and stationary while marching on.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Remark Concerning the Sixth Step, Accessibility of the Truth at a Wish (p. 832)

Perhaps up to this point, this knowledge is facilitated for him only at times. But then he moves gradually until he attains it whenever he wishes.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Remark Concerning the Seventh Step, Conjunction with the Truth without Even a Wish

Then he advances beyond this rank so that his situation does not depend on a wish. Rather, whenever he notices one thing, he also notices another,³⁷ even if his noticing is not for the purpose of consideration. Thus, it is available to him to move away from the world of falsehood to the world of Truth, remaining in the latter, while the ignorant move around him.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Remark Concerning the Eighth Step, Becoming a Replica of the Truth While Remaining Aware of Oneself (p. 833)

If he crosses from spiritual exercise to attainment of the Truth, his innermost thought will become a polished mirror with which he faces

37. That is, the First Truth.

the side of the Truth. The lofty pleasures are then poured on him, and he is pleased with himself due to the traces of the Truth that these pleasures involve. To him belongs a glance at the Truth and a glance at himself – for he is still reluctant.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Remark Concerning the Ninth Step, Awareness of Nothing but the Truth: Real Conjunction (p. 834)

Following this, he abandons himself. Thus, he notices the side of sanctity only. If he notices his self he does so inasmuch as it notices the Truth, and not inasmuch as it is ornamented with the pleasure of having the Truth (p. 835). At this point, the arrival is real.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Admonition Concerning the Deficiency of the Levels Below That of Real Conjunction (p. 836)

Paying attention to whatever the Truth transcends is preoccupation. Relying on whatever obeys the animal soul is weakness (p. 837). Rejoicing in the ornament of pleasure, inasmuch as it is pleasure – even if it is in the Truth – is perplexity. And advancing in totality toward the Truth is salvation.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Remark Concerning the Two Main Levels of Knowledge: The Negative and the Positive (p. 838)

Knowledge begins by the truly adept's separation, detachment (p. 839), abandonment, and rejection – concentrating on a togetherness that is the togetherness of the attributes of the Truth (p. 840), reaching the One, and then stopping.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Remark Concerning the Object of Knowledge and the Necessity for Experiencing It (p. 841)

He who prefers knowledge for the sake of knowledge professes belief in knowledge. He who finds knowledge, yet as if he does not find it but finds its object, plunges into the clamor of the arrival. Here there

are steps not fewer in number than those that have preceded. We have preferred brevity concerning them, for conversation does not capture them (p. 842), a phrase does not explicate them, and discourse does not reveal anything about them. No power responsive to language other than the imagination receives even a semblance of them.³⁸ He who desires to know these steps must move gradually until he becomes one of the people of witnessing and not of speaking, one of those who arrive at the Truth Itself and not those who hear the trace.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Admonition Concerning the Knower's Equal Treatment of Everything (p. 843)

The knower is bright-faced, friendly, and smiling. Due to his modesty, he honors the young as he honors the old. He is as pleased with the unclearheaded as he is with the alert. How could he not be bright-faced when he enjoys the Truth and everything other than the Truth, for he sees the Truth even in everything other than the Truth! Furthermore, how could he not treat all as equal when, to him, all are equal! They are objects of mercy, preoccupied with falsehoods.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Admonition Concerning the Knower's States Before and After the Arrival (p. 844)

To the knower belong states in which he cannot bear the sound of a murmur, let alone the remainder of the attractive preoccupations. Such states are at the moments at which he turns his innermost thought to the Truth, if a veil – whether from himself or from the movement of his innermost thought – appears before the arrival. However, at the time of the arrival, he is either preoccupied with the Truth, to the exclusion of everything else, (p. 845) or he is open to the two sides³⁹ due to the broad range of his power. Similarly, when moving in the cloak of dignity, he is the most bright-faced of the creatures of God by virtue of his rapture.

38. The imagination does this not because of language but because it neighbors the rational soul, which can have direct experience of these highest levels. See the Tenth Class, pp. 100–1 where it is stated that, if a knower has vision of the realm of the Truth, his imagination will experience the appearance of objects that have a remote resemblance to the divine objects.

39. The two sides being the Truth and everything else other than the Truth.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Admonition Concerning the Knower's Magnanimity (p. 846)

The knower is not concerned with scrutinizing the states of others, nor with gathering information about others, nor is he inclined to anger at observing bad deeds, as he is filled with mercy. This is because he discerns God's secret regarding destiny (p. 847). If he requests good deeds, he does so with kindness characterized by advice and not with violence characterized by pointing out disgrace. If he magnifies the value of good deeds, it could be because he wishes to protect such deeds from those who do not adopt them.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Admonition Concerning Some Further Character Qualities of the Knower (p. 848)

The knower is courageous. How could he be otherwise, when he is in isolation from the fear of death? He is generous. How could he be otherwise, when he is in isolation from the love of falsehood? He is forgiving of others. How could he be otherwise, when his soul is more magnanimous than to be injured with evil by another? Finally, he is forgetful of grudges. How could he be otherwise, when his memory is preoccupied with the Truth?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Admonition Concerning the Difference in the Knowers' Attitudes (p. 849)

The knowers may differ in their endeavors according to their different thoughts that are based on their different motivating considerations. The knower may consider a rough life as equal to a luxurious life; or he may prefer the former to the latter. Similarly, he may consider a bad odor as equal to a good odor; or he may prefer the former to the latter (p. 850). This is so when his soul is concerned about belittling whatever is other than the Truth. Again, he may be inclined toward ornament, love for the best in every genus, and hatred for the incomplete and the bad. This is so when he considers his habit of finding evidence for the Truth in the accompanying external states. Thus, he seeks beauty in everything, because it is a good quality given by the grace of the First Providence and is closer to being of the type toward which the knower's inclination is turned. All these attitudes may differ

from one knower to another and may differ in the same knower from one time to another.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Admonition Concerning the Knower's Exemption from Religious Duties While in the State of Conjunction (p. 851)

The knower may be inattentive to the thing by virtue of which he reaches the Truth. Thus, he becomes ignorant of everything around him. Therefore, he is in the same class as those on whom religious duties are not imposed. How could this be otherwise, when religious duties are imposed only on one who understands the imposition of religious duties at the time one understands it, and on one who becomes a sinner for not abiding by the religious duties,⁴⁰ even though he does not understand the imposition of religious duties at the time of imposition, but has the capacity for doing so.⁴¹

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Remark Concerning Conjunction as Possible Only for a Small Number of People with a Certain Type of Nature

The Truth Itself is loftier than to be a drinking place for every comer, or a thing to be viewed except by one after another (p. 852). That is why what is included in this part of the work is an object of ridicule for the ignorant, and an idea for the scholar. Thus, one who listens to it and is then revolted by it must accuse his soul of not being appropriate for it. Every being is directed with facility toward that for which it was created.

40. Text: *ijtarah bi-kbatfatih*.

41. Such as one under anesthesia.

Tenth Class (p. 853) On the Secrets of Signs⁴²

CHAPTER ONE

Remark Concerning the Knower's Abstinence from Food

If you learn that a knower has refrained for an unusual interval from receiving the little food he has, graciously assent and consider this among the well-known principles of nature.

CHAPTER TWO

Admonition Concerning the Knower's Abstinence from Food as Compared to the Effect of Certain Illnesses (p. 854)

Remember that if our natural powers are distracted by the digestion of bad materials from processing the good materials, the latter will be preserved with slight dissolution and with no need for substitution. He who enjoys the retention of the good materials may afford being deprived of nourishment for a long time. If one in a different state⁴³ is deprived in a similar way – rather, for one-tenth of the time of his deprivation,⁴⁴ one would perish. On the contrary, in spite of this,⁴⁵ the life of the one retaining the good materials is preserved.⁴⁶

CHAPTER THREE

Admonition Concerning the Effect of the Soul on the Body, and Vice Versa (p. 855)

Has it not become clear to you⁴⁷ that the dispositions that primarily belong to the soul are such that dispositions may proceed downward from them to bodily powers? Similarly, the dispositions that primarily

42. See *Liure*, trans. A. M. Goichon (Paris: Librairie Philosophique, 1951), p. 503, n. 1.

43. That is, without the retention of the good materials.

44. That is, for a much shorter period of time than that of the one who retains the good materials.

45. That is, long-term deprivation.

46. This chapter is intended to show that it is possible for one to survive without food for quite a long period of time. The cause mentioned here is physical.

47. From the Third Class, Chapter Six, p. 358.

Knower's Advantages in Regard to Abstinence

belong to the bodily powers are such that dispositions proceed upward from them and reach the soul itself. How could it not have become clear to you when you know that a frightened person experiences failure of appetite, disorder in digestion, and powerlessness to perform natural acts that were possible.⁴⁸

CHAPTER FOUR

Remark Concerning the Knower's Advantages in Regard to Abstinence over Those Who Suffer from Certain Illnesses (p. 856)

If the tranquil soul tames⁴⁹ the bodily powers, these powers are pulled behind the soul along with their preoccupations⁵⁰ toward which these powers turn, whether or not there is need for these preoccupations⁵¹ in the management of the body. If the pulling of the soul toward the divine realm is intensified, the pulling of these powers toward the soul is also intensified, as is their being distracted from the direction that they had abandoned. Thus, the natural acts that are attributed to the power of the vegetative soul⁵² stop, and the only dissolution of good materials that occurs is less than that which occurs in the state of illness (p. 857). How could this be otherwise, when the illness accompanied by fever is bound to dissolution due to fever, even if not due to the management of nature? In addition to this, in certain types of illness, there is an opposite element that weakens the bodily powers and which does not exist in the above-mentioned case of pulling these powers behind the soul. Hence, like the ill, the knower has a nature that is distracted from matter, with the addition of two more advantages: the lack of dissolution resulting from something like the hot, bad mixture, and the lack of illness that opposes these powers. Furthermore, the knower has a third assistant. That is the bodily rest from the movements of the body – a rest that is the best assistant. Therefore, it is more appropriate for the knower's bodily powers to be preserved than for

48. Like the last chapter, the present chapter is intended to show that it is possible not to feel the need for food. However, the cause mentioned here originates in the soul and not in the body.

49. Or masters. The Arabic word used is *rādat*. Both translations are appropriate since when the soul tames the bodily powers, it also masters them.

50. Such as digestion.

51. Text: *ilayha* (for them). This leaves the text ambiguous.

52. These acts are responsible for nutrition, growth, and reproduction, which is why the power of the vegetative soul has three subpowers responsible for these three separate acts: the power of nutrition, the power of growth, and the power of reproduction (see Third Class, Chapter Twenty-Four).

those of the ill. What is related to you concerning this is not in opposition to the teachings of nature.

CHAPTER FIVE

Remark Concerning the Knower's Unusual Capacity for Action (p. 858)

If you learn that, by his power, a knower performs an act, a motion, or a movement not within the capacity of one who resembles him, do not receive this with much denial; for you may find a way to its cause⁵³ through the consideration of the teachings of nature.

CHAPTER SIX

Admonition Concerning the Reason for This Unusual Capacity (p. 859)

When a human being's states are in equilibrium, he may have some force confined in, and limited to, what he manages and moves. Later on, a certain disposition occurs to his soul whose power to reach that limit is then weakened such that he becomes unable to perform one-tenth of what he had proceeded to achieve. This is similar to what happens to him at the point of fear or grief. Or another certain disposition occurs to his soul such that the limit of his force is then doubled so that he would have full control over this limit by virtue of the essence of his power. This is exemplified in what happens to him at the point of anger or rivalry (p. 860), at the point of moderate intoxication, or at the point of moving joy. Therefore, it is not surprising if an excitement occurs to the knower as it would occur at the point of joy – an excitement that gives his power dominance – or if he is overcome by an excitement as one is overcome at the point of rivalry such that his powers are inflamed with enthusiasm. This excitement is greater and more intense than what happens at the point of anger or moving joy. How could it be otherwise, when this excitement results from having joy in the clear Truth, the principle of powers and the foundation of mercy?

53. That is, you may discover its cause.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Admonition Concerning the Knower's Knowledge of Invisible Things (p. 861)

If you learn that a knower speaks about an invisible thing and is correct in presenting good news or a warning, assent and do not find it difficult to believe that; for in the teachings of nature, there are known causes of this.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Remark Concerning the Possibility of This Knowledge in Wakefulness as This Possibility in Sleep Is Asserted by Experience and Reasoning

Experience and reasoning agree that in the state of sleep, the human soul enjoys some attainment of the invisible (p. 862). Thus, there is no obstacle to the occurrence of such an attainment in the waking state, except one for whose removal there is a way and for whose elevation there is a possibility.⁵⁴

Hearsay and personal familiarity (*at-ta'aruf*) attest to this type of experience. There is no human being who has not experienced this by himself in ways that have inspired him with assent, except if one of them has a corrupt temperament and dormant powers of imagination and memory. As for reasoning, find insight for it in admonitions that will follow.

CHAPTER NINE

Admonition Concerning the Manner According to Which Particular Things Are Imprinted in the Celestial Intellects and Souls (p. 863)

You have learned earlier⁵⁵ that the particular things are imprinted in the intellectual world under a universal aspect. After that, it was pointed out to you⁵⁶ that the celestial bodies have souls that possess particular knowledge and particular wills produced by a particular opinion. There is nothing that prevents these souls from conceiving the particular concomitants of the particular movements of these bodies – these concomitants are expressed by the beings these bodies produce in the

54. This obstacle being preoccupation with the sensible world.

55. It is unclear to what specific passage Ibn Sina is referring.

56. Again, Ibn Sina's reference is unclear.

world of elements (p. 864). Furthermore, if what is revealed by a kind of consideration is concealed except from those who are well grounded in the exalted wisdom – namely, that the celestial bodies have, after the separate intellects that belong to them as principles, rational souls that are not imprinted in their matters but possess a certain relation to their matters (as do our souls with regard to our bodies), and that by virtue of this relation, the celestial bodies attain some real perfection (p. 865) – then the celestial bodies will have an additional significance in this. They manifest a particular opinion and another universal one.

You gather from what we have pointed out that particular things are imprinted in the intelligible world in a universal manner (p. 866) and are imprinted in the psychic world in a particular manner, perceptive of time, or are imprinted in the psychic world in both manners simultaneously.

CHAPTER TEN

Remark Concerning the Conditions Under Which Our Souls Can Receive the Imprints of Invisible Things from the Celestial Intellects and Souls

It belongs to your soul to receive the imprints of the intelligible world in accordance with its preparation and the removal of obstacles (p. 867). You have already learned this. So do not deny that some invisible things are imprinted in your soul from their world. I will add to your insight regarding this matter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Admonition Concerning the Conditions for the Soul's Preoccupation with Some of Its Powers to the Exclusion of Some Others

The psychic powers are mutually attractive and mutually repulsive (p. 868). Thus, when anger is excited, it distracts the soul from the appetite, and vice versa. If the internal senses are completely free to perform their functions, they distract the soul from the external senses. Therefore, one would hardly hear or see,⁵⁷ and vice versa. Hence, if the internal senses are lured to the external senses, the intellect will be turned by its instrument⁵⁸ toward the external senses and will, therefore, be cut off

57. This is because hearing and seeing, like all the other sensations, require not only healthy external senses but also a soul attentive to these sensations. The external senses receive stimuli from the outside world, but it is the soul that interprets these stimuli.

58. That is, thought.

from its cognitive movement in which the intellect often has need for its instrument (p. 869). Another thing will also happen. Again, the soul will be lured only to the side of the strong movement. Consequently, by force, the soul will abandon the acts that belong to it. If the soul has the power to control the internal senses under its management, the external senses will also be weakened and will not provide the soul with that which is reliable.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Admonition Concerning the Stability and Observability of Certain Representations in the Common Sense (p. 870)

The common sense is the tablet of imprints. When the imprints take hold of this tablet, they enter the class of observed things. A sensible thing that produces an imprint may be removed from the external sense, while its form remains in the common sense for a short time. Thus, it remains in the class of observed things and not of those imagined. Recall what has been said to you concerning the descending diameter as a straight line and the imprint of a moving point as a circumference of a circle.⁵⁹ Thus, if the form is represented in the tablet of the common sense, it becomes observed. This is so whether it is at the beginning of the state of its representation in this tablet due to the external object, whether it remains while the sensible object remains (p. 871), whether it persists after the removal of the sensible object, or whether it occurs in this tablet not due to the sensible object – if this were possible.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Remark Concerning the Evidence for the Internal Source of Certain Representations

A group of ill and bilious people may observe sensible forms that are clear and present but that have no relation to an external sensible object. Thus, the imprinting of these forms is due to an internal cause (p. 872) or to a cause influencing an internal cause.

The common sense may also receive imprints from forms moving in the region of the imagination and estimation, as these forms are also imprinted in the region of the imagination and estimation from the tablet of the common sense, in a manner similar to that between facing mirrors.

59. See *Livre*, p. 510, n. 4.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Admonition Concerning the Obstacles to the Representations in the Common Sense That Are Caused Internally (p. 873)

Furthermore, two preoccupations deter this imprinting. One is sensible and external. This distracts the tablet of the common sense from other things⁶⁰ by what it imprints on this tablet,⁶¹ as if it strips this tablet from the imagination and pulls this tablet away from the imagination by force. The other is internal. It is either intellectual or estimative.⁶² This latter preoccupation controls the acts of the imagination – managing it by means of this preoccupation's assistants.⁶³ Thus, it distracts the imagination from having power over the common sense by placing the imagination under its own control. Hence, the imagination will not have the power to produce imprints in the common sense, for the movement of the former is weak since it follows instead of being followed (p. 874).

When one of the two preoccupations is at rest, the other persists but may be incapable of having control. The imagination will then have power over the common sense. Hence, the forms appear in the common sense as observed sensibles.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Remark Concerning Sleep as a State in Which These Obstacles Are Removed

Sleep preoccupies the external senses in a visible manner. It may also primarily preoccupy the essence of the soul by that with which this essence is lured to the side of nature, which assimilates and manages nourishment and which seeks rest from other motions in a manner already indicated to you (p. 875). If the soul attends to its proper acts, it will distract nature in some manner from nature's acts, as has been pointed out to you. Thus, it is of natural propriety that the soul have some preoccupying attraction to the manifestations of nature since sleep is more similar to illness than to health.⁶⁴ If this is so, then the internal

60. That is, the imprints of the forms of the imagination.

61. That is, from the external objects.

62. The intellectual preoccupation occurs in human beings, and the estimative preoccupation occurs in animals.

63. That is, the objects of these two powers.

64. In other words, in sleep, the soul should not be preoccupied with its own acts but with the body, as it is in illness. In both cases, the soul should cooperate with the body so that the body can fulfill its proper needs, such as assimilation of food in the case of sleep and recovery in the case of illness.

imaginative powers⁶⁵ take strong control and find the common sense inoperative. Therefore, the imagined imprints appear in the common sense as observed objects. Hence, in sleep, one sees states that fall in the class of observed objects.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Remark Concerning Disease as a Similar State (p. 876)

If a disease overcomes the principal organs of the body, the soul will be fully pulled to the side of the disease. This distracts the soul from the control that belongs to it. With this, one of the two controlling factors is weakened. Thus, it would be undeniable that imagined forms appear in the tablet of the common sense due to the weakening of one of the two controlling factors.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Admonition Concerning the Condition Under Which the Soul Is Independent in Its Acts

The stronger the power of the soul, the less passive is the soul with respect to luring things,⁶⁶ and the stronger is its control over the two sides.⁶⁷ But whenever the soul is in a reverse condition, the consequence is the reverse (p. 877). Similarly, whenever the soul has a stronger power, the soul is less involved in sense preoccupations, and a larger portion of this power remains to look after the other side.⁶⁸ If the soul has an intense power, this idea⁶⁹ in it will also be strong. Furthermore, if the soul is well exercised, its caution from the opposite of exercise and its approach⁷⁰ of what befits exercise will be stronger.

65. See *Livre*, p. 512, n. 1.

66. Text: *al-muḥākayāt* (similar things). Forget's reading here – '*al-muḥāḍḍabāt*' instead of '*al-muḥākayāt*' – is preferable, for it is more consistent with what has been said about the powers that seek to lure the soul to their side and that are touched upon in the present chapter (*Ishārāt*, ed. Forget, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1892, p. 213).

67. That is, the conflicting sides, such as the internal and external senses.

68. That is, the internal preoccupations.

69. Of being less involved with sense preoccupations or any one side and able to pay attention to the other side.

70. Text: *taṣarrufuhā*, literally 'its management,' 'its free action.'

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Admonition Concerning the Conditions Under Which the Soul Attains Conjunction with the Divine Realm (p. 878)

If the sense preoccupations are reduced and fewer preoccupations remain, it is not unlikely for the soul to have escapes that lead from the work of the imagination to the side of sanctity. Thus, representations of the invisible world are imprinted in the soul, which then flow to the world of the imagination and are then imprinted in the common sense (p. 879). This happens either in the state of sleep, which preoccupies the external senses, or in the state of a certain disease, which weakens the imagination. The imagination may be weakened by a disease, and it may be weakened by much movement that causes the disintegration of the spirit, which is the instrument of the imagination. Thus, the imagination rapidly proceeds to some rest and some lack of preoccupation (p. 880). Hence, the soul is easily pulled to the higher side. If a representation of an invisible thing occurs to the soul, the imagination turns toward this representation, and receives it as well. This turning is due either to (1) a stimulus given by this occurring thing when the imagination is quick to discern this stimulus after having rested its movement and relieved its weakness, or to (2) the rational soul's natural employment of the imagination, for the imagination assists the soul when such opportunities are presented. If the imagination accepts this representation, at a time when the imagination is free from preoccupations, this representation will be imprinted on the tablet of the common sense.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Remark Concerning the Imaginative Prophecy⁷¹

If the soul is of a strong substance, embracing the sides in strife against each other, it would not be unlikely that this stealthiness and opportunity-taking occur to it in the waking state. The trace may descend to the memory and then stop there (p. 881). This trace may also take hold and, thus, shine in the imagination with clarity. The imagination then draws by force to its side the tablet of the common sense – thus representing in it what was imprinted in itself, especially that the rational soul does not shun the imagination; rather, it manifests to it

71. This title has been drawn from a passage in the *Psychology of the Physics of ash-Shifā'*, pp. 169–83. The conclusion drawn there is that experiences like those mentioned in the present chapter are referred to as imaginative prophecy.

the divine trace.⁷² This is similar to what the imagination⁷³ does in the ill and the bilious. But the former is more befitting. If this is done,⁷⁴ the trace becomes a visually observed object, or a call, or something else. This trace may also be capable of manifesting itself as an image with a complete form, or as an actually well ordered discourse. Finally, it may have a manifestation of the highest state of ornamentation.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Admonition Concerning the Causes of the Movement and Rest of the Imagination (p. 882)

The imaginative power is constituted such that it imitates any neighboring intellectual or temperamental disposition and moves quickly from one thing to its like or to the opposite – in brief, to whatever is due to that thing by virtue of a cause. Undoubtedly, there are particular causes of the individuation of that thing, even though we ourselves do not realize them concretely.

Were this power not so constituted, we would not have what assists us in the movement of thought that seeks a conclusion by grasping the middle terms and what resembles them in some manner (p. 883), in the recalling of things forgotten, and in other benefits. Anything that appears turns this power toward this movement or controls it in place. Such controlling is due either to the strong opposition of the soul to such movement (p. 884) or to the intense clarity of the form which is imprinted in the soul such that this form is received in the imagination with intense clarity and firm representation. This detracts from wavering and hesitating and maintains the imagination at a standstill where the reception of this form has strong representation. This is similar to what the external senses also do.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Remark Concerning the Degrees of the Intensity of Thought

The spiritual trace that presents itself to the soul in the two states of sleep and wakefulness may be weak. Thus, it does not move the imagination or the memory, and no trace of it remains in either of them. It may also be stronger than this and, hence, move the imagination. But

72. The text is ambiguous here, reading: *lā siyyama wan-naḥs an-nāṭiqa muḥḥira lahu gbayr ṣadifa 'anhu* (especially that the rational soul manifests to it, views it, reveals it and does not shun it).

73. Text: *at-tawāḥḥum*.

74. That is, if the divine trace is imprinted on the common sense.

the imagination remains intent on movement and abandons clarity. Thus, memory does not take hold of this trace but takes hold only of the movements of the imagination and the semblance of this trace (p. 885). Finally, the spiritual trace may be very strong, and the soul self-possessed when it receives it. Thus, this form is imprinted in the imagination with clarity. The soul may be concerned with this form and, consequently, this form will be imprinted in memory in a strong manner and will not be disturbed by the movements of the imagination.⁷⁵

This does not occur to you only with respect to these traces but also with respect to thoughts you entertain while awake. Thus, sometimes your thought is maintained in your memory. Besides, sometimes you move away from it to imagined things that make you forget your preoccupations. Hence, you would need to analyze in a reverse manner and begin to move from that which presents itself and is grasped to that which presents itself next to it,⁷⁶ and so on to another. The memory may grasp a primary preoccupation it had lost, and it may be cut off from it. The memory grasps such a preoccupation only by a kind of analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

A Follow-up Concerning That Which Requires Interpretation or Expression and That Which Does Not (p. 886)

That which is among the traces under consideration and is maintained in memory with stability, whether in the state of wakefulness or sleep, is either an inspiration (*ilhām*), a pure revelation (*wahī*), or a dream (p. 887) that does not require interpretation or expression. But that which itself has ceased, while its semblances and effects remain, requires one of the two: revelation requires interpretation and dream⁷⁷ requires expression. This varies in accordance with individuals, times, and habits.

75. The idea is that the more the soul is concerned with something, the more it concentrates on that thing; hence, the more clearly it can see that thing. Furthermore, the clearer a thing is to the soul, the stronger that thing is. But the stronger a thing is, the stronger is its reflection. The strength of the reflection can be so high as to render this reflection totally unaffected by any change, something that enables this reflection to be preserved with stability.

76. *Anh ilayh* (from it to it) is deleted as it is redundant.

77. Text: *ḥukm* (judgment). But it is more consistent with the text to read it: *ḥulm* (dream), as Forger reads it (*op. cit.*, p. 217).

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Remark Concerning the Assistance of Physical Acts in Receiving Invisible Things

Some natures may seek assistance in acts that produce perplexity of the senses and arrest of the imagination (p. 888). Thus, the power that can receive invisible things is properly prepared and the estimative power is directed toward a specific goal. Hence, the reception of invisible things is made specific. This is exemplified in what is related about a group of Turks, that, if they turn to their diviner to offer them knowledge of future events, he himself resorts to very fast running, during which he continues to pant until he almost faints. He then utters what he imagines. The listeners retain with accuracy what he expresses so that they can base the management of certain affairs on it. Similarly, some of those who seek reasoning about this idea are preoccupied with reflection on, for example, a transparent thing that shudders the vision due to its agitation, or astonishes the vision due to its transparency. The same is true of those who are preoccupied with reflection on a stain of brilliant black things (p. 889), or on shiny or wavy things.

All of this is among the things that preoccupy the senses with a kind of perplexity, and among the things that move the imagination in a perplexing manner, as if all of this is by force and not by nature. In the perplexity of the senses and the imagination, there is the opportunity for the previously mentioned stealthiness. This affects mostly the nature of one who is naturally closest to being astonished and who is best fit to receive mixed discourses, as are the unalert and youngsters (p. 890). Sometimes this is assisted by prolixity of a mixed discourse, by a delusion due to a touch of insanity, and, in short, by everything that involves perplexity and astonishment.

If the estimative power is intensely engaged in seeking this, then, all of a sudden, such conjunction occurs. Sometimes the appearance of an invisible thing is a kind of a strong opinion. Sometimes it resembles a speech of an insane one, or a call from one who is absent. Furthermore, sometimes it is accompanied by the visual appearance of encountering a thing such that we grasp the form of the invisible thing by observation.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Admonition Concerning the Type of Evidence for the Appearance of Invisible Events (p. 891)

You must know that these invisible things are in no way the subject of speech. The only testimony for them is possible opinions to which

one is led from intellectual considerations only – even though, if this appearance of invisible things occurs, it will be something reliable. These are experiences, which when confirmed, their causes are then sought. These states occur to the lovers of insight in themselves as part of the happiness that occurs to them. Such lovers also observe these states in others time after time, such that this would be an experience that confirms that a miraculous thing exists and is authentic, and invokes a search for its cause. When this is clear, the benefit will be great, and the soul will find tranquility in the existence of those causes. Furthermore, the estimative power will submit and, thus, will not oppose the intellect in its viewing of these causes. This is one of the most enormous benefits and greatest preoccupations.

If we relate the details of this part that we have observed and that were told by those we have believed, this discourse will be prolonged; but one who does not believe a summary also finds it easy not to believe details.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Admonition Concerning Other Acts of the Knower That Appear Extraordinary (p. 892)

You may receive information about the knowers that almost runs counter to custom, and then you begin to disbelieve. This is like saying a knower sought rain for people, hence, they received rain; or sought recovery for them, hence, they recovered; or wished them ill, hence, they were cast down, inflicted by earth tremors, or perished in another way. This is also like saying he wished them well, hence, they were emancipated from diseases, murrain, torrential stream and flood; or a beast submits to some of them, or no bird flees from them, or other similar things occur that do not count as belonging to the kind of things that are clearly impossible. Stand still and do not rush into rejecting these things, for such things have causes in the mysteries of nature. Perhaps it will be possible for me to relate some of these causes to you.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Reminder and Admonition Concerning the Causes of the Acts Mentioned Above (p. 893)

Has it not become clear to you that the relation of the rational soul to the body is not one of something imprinted in another, but another sort of relation? You also know that the disposition of belief which is

well established in the soul, as well as what follows after such a disposition, may proceed to the body of that soul in spite of that soul's substantial separation from its body. That is why the imagination of an individual walking on a stump that perches in empty space exerts more influence on that individual's slipping than does a similar imagination when the stump is on firm ground (p. 894).⁷⁸ Furthermore, people's imaginations are followed by a gradual or a sudden change in temperament, or by the beginning of diseases (p. 895) or the relief from diseases.

Thus, do not think it is far-fetched that some souls possess a fixed habit whose influence reaches beyond their bodies and, that due to their power, these souls operate as a kind of soul for the world. As these souls influence their bodies due to a temperamental quality, they also influence other bodies in the world due to principles belonging to all that I have enumerated,⁷⁹ since the principles of what I have enumerated are these qualities, especially in a body that has become more deserving of what I have enumerated due to the proper relation it has to the bodies of these souls. This is particularly so since, as you have already learned, not everything that heats is hot, nor everything that cools is cold (p. 896). Therefore, do not deny that some souls have this power such that they act on bodies other than their own and that such bodies react to these souls as the bodies of these souls do. Again, do not deny that these souls extend their proper powers to the powers of other souls on which they act, especially if the former souls have sharpened their fixed habit by means of subjugating their bodily powers which belong to them. Thus, they subjugate a desire, an anger, or a fear of other souls.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Remark Concerning the Source of the Psychic Power Responsible for Producing the Unusual Acts (p. 897)

This power may belong to the soul by virtue of the primordial temperament that, due to the psychical disposition it provides, the individual soul becomes individuated. This power may also occur due to a realized temperament.⁸⁰ Again, it may occur due to a kind of acquisition that makes the soul as if it were abstract due to the intensity of the soul's intelligence. This happens, for example, to the pious friends of God.

78. See also *An-Nafs*, p. 200.

79. In the last chapter.

80. That is, a temperament that occurs later as opposed to the primordial temperament that is built in by nature at the beginning of life.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Remark Concerning the Various Purposes for Which the Power to Perform Unusual Acts Can Be Used (p. 898)

He to whose nature of soul this occurs, and is generous, a guide to the good, and pure of soul, is one of the prophets who possesses the power of performing miracles, or one of the friends of God who has magnanimity. His purity of soul, in this sense, adds to him something over the requirement of his nature and, thus, he attains the highest objective (p. 899). However, he to whom this occurs when he is evil, and uses it for evil purposes, is a malicious magician. He may break the power of his soul due to his excess in this regard. Thus, he does not join anything that belongs to the pure.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Remark Concerning the Cause of the Evil Eye

Giving the evil eye is almost of this kind.⁸¹ The principle of this act is an admiring state of the soul, and, due to its character, it affects the object of admiration by weakening it. This is thought to be far-fetched only by one who assumes that what affects bodies is either in contact with them,⁸² dispatches to them a part of itself⁸³ (p. 900), or exerts its character on them through an intermediary.⁸⁴ But one who reflects on that whose principles we have already presented⁸⁵ will seek the removal of this condition from the rank of consideration.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Admonition Concerning the Principles Due to Which Extraordinary Things⁸⁶ Proceed to Nature

Extraordinary things proceed to the realm of nature due to three principles. The first is the above-mentioned psychical dispositions. The second is the properties of terrestrial bodies, such as the property of the magnet to attract iron by means of a force that belongs to the

81. That is, the second kind, in which one is evil and uses the power for performing unusual acts for evil purposes.

82. As the ice cools the water in which it is placed.

83. As the clouds cool the air by dispatching to the air particles of themselves we call rain.

84. As the electricity cools the air in a room by means of an air conditioner.

85. See *Liure*, p. 523, n. 4.

86. *Al-umūr al-gharība*. Remember there is nothing, according to Ibn Sīnā, that is extraordinary in reality. The expression 'extraordinary' is used to refer only to what appears to be extraordinary.

magnet. And the third is the relation between the celestial powers and the mixtures of terrestrial bodies that are specifically disposed to a certain position (p. 901) or between these powers and the powers of terrestrial souls that are specifically equipped with celestial states – whether active or passive – that result in the occurrence of extraordinary effects.

Magic is of the first kind. Prodigies, miracles worked by saints, and incantations are of the second kind. Finally, talismans are of the third kind.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

A Piece of Advice

Beware that your smartness and detachment from the commoners do not make you go on denying everything (p. 902), for that is rashness and weakness. Your strong rejection of that whose clarity is not yet made evident to you is no less a mistake than your strong belief in that whose evidence does not lie in your hands. Rather, you must hold on to the line of suspending judgment – even if you are disturbed by the denial of what your hearing recognizes as true – as long as its impossibility is not evident to you. Thus, it is appropriate that you relegate such a thing to the region of possibility as long as you are not driven away from that by firm evidence. You must know that in nature there are marvels, and that the active superior powers together with the passive inferior ones produce unfamiliar things.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

A Closing Comment and a Wish (p. 903)

O brother! In these remarks, I have brought forth to you the cream of the truth and, bit by bit, I have fed you in sensitive words the best pieces of wisdom (p. 904). Therefore, protect this truth from the ignorant, the vulgar, those who are not endowed with sharpness of mind, with skill and experience, those who lend an ear to the crowds, and who have gone astray from philosophy and have fallen behind. Thus, if you find a person whose purity of heart and goodness of conduct you can trust, as well as his suspending judgment on that to which doubt hastens (p. 905) and his viewing the truth with the eye of satisfaction and honesty, then gradually, and in bits and pieces, give him the truth he requests, carefully observing what you get from what you have already given (p. 906). Ask him to heed God and the inescapable faith, following your manner in what you give him and taking

you as an example. If you divulge or lose this knowledge, God will be the arbitrator between you and me. God is sufficient as a trustee.

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